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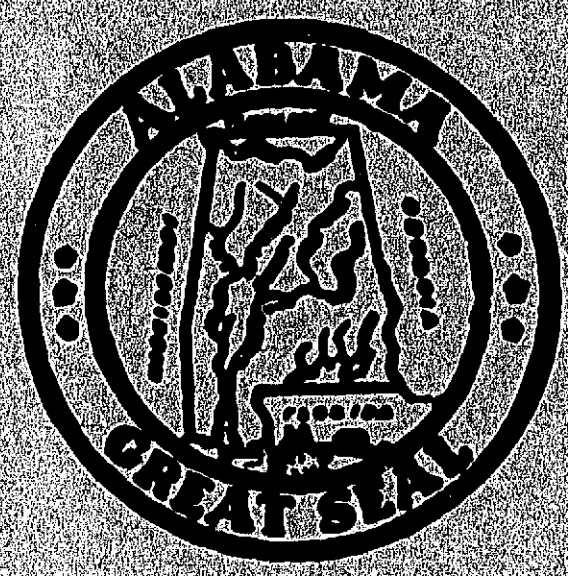

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NAVAL OPERATIONS ON THE APALACHICOLA AND CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVERS, 1861-1865

by

Maxine Turner

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I. INTRODUCTION: THE APALACHICOLA-CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER SYSTEM

The twentieth century has taught historians the term *cold war*. It hardly seems applicable to the heroic deeds of the American Civil War. It implies threats of action rather than actual engagements. It calls up images of men stationed in remote places where nothing ever happens except an occasional incident which heightens tension. It implies also the development of new weapons, government contracts, cost overruns. It seems to be a peculiarly contemporary term, yet there was a theatre of operations during the Civil War to which the term *cold war* could be applied, the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee River System.

As it related strategically to the Union and Confederacy during the Civil War, the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee River System included the area drained by the Chattahoochee River from Columbus, Georgia, to its confluence with the Flint River at Chattahoochee, Florida, and the Apalachicola River from Chattahoochee, Florida, to the port of Apalachicola, Florida, on the Gulf of Mexico.

To the Confederacy this entire area was of considerable importance. The port of Apalachicola had been an important commercial point prior to the war. As early as 1854, Apalachicola wharves loaded about seventy square-rigged vessels a year and shipped 160,000 bales of cotton. Finished cotton products from Columbus, Georgia, mills and raw cotton and other agricultural products from Alabama and Georgia were shipped along the river system by steamers to Apalachicola. Ocean-going vessels came into the port with coffee and other products for the area to the north.

The hundred-mile course of the Apalachicola River northward to Chattachoochee, Florida, is extremely winding. The river is bounded in many places by swamps and marshes and at many points deep creeks enter the river. Confederate blockade runners found anchorage in these tributaries during the early days of the war. There they received cargo before going downriver to the port.

Along the Apalachicola are locations which the Confederates fortified or considered as places to sink obstructions.

The first of these was Fort Gadsden, an elevated post twenty miles above Apalachicola. However, the Confederates were never able to provide heavy guns there, and the post was held by a picket guard. Two miles upriver from Fort Gadeden was Owl Creek which provided anchorage for small vessels until a Union raid there in 1863.

Twenty-eight miles north of Apalachicola, the Chipola River enters the Apalachicola from the west. Navigable almost to the town of Marianna, Florida, a cut-off from this stream through Gum Swamp allowed river steamers to pass the obstructions which were placed in the Apalachicola in 1862. This series of obstructions was located at the Narrows, a five-mile series of sharp bends in the river thirty-five miles north of Apalachicola. Mocassin Slough, which runs roughly parallel to the river on the east, provided another by-pass for the obstructions for steamers enroute south.

Half way between the towns of Apalachicola and Chattachoochee was the busy landing of Iola. Eight miles north of that point was Ricko's Bluff, at first a transfer point for mail to the south and later a fortified garrison. It was important to the Confederates both as a fortification and as a supply depot for troops stationed farther to the south along the river. Between Ricko's Bluff and Chattachoochee, a railroad connected the river with Quincy, Florida, which was later the headquarters of the Confederate Military District of Middle Florida.

Blountstown Bar lay seventy-eight miles north of Apalachicola. The gunboat *Chattachoochee* was partially destroyed and sunk there by a boiler explosion in 1863. Six miles farther north is Alum Bluff where citizens of Columbus, Georgia, planned to obstruct the river. A Confederate battery placed there for a time in 1862 was later moved to Rock Bluff, eight miles to the north, where a second obstruction was laid.

The town of Chattachoochee, Florida, lies one hundred miles north of Apalachicola at the confluence of the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers. Below that point in the river system, Confederate efforts were centered upon obstructions sunk in the river and protected by batteries or picket guards.

Prior to the war there was a United States Arsenal at Chattahoochee, Florida, and the town itself was a point of some importance as a stop-over for steamers which traveled the Chattachoochee and Flint Rivers to Apalachicola. After the Florida volunteers seized the Arsenal in 1861, Chattahoochee became a Confederate post and an official ordnance station.

From Chattahoochee, the Flint River lies northeast, descending along a winding course through the rich agricultural section of southwestern Georgia. Neither Bainbridge along the river nor Albany, the head of navigation at the time of the war, played a prominent role in the operations in the river system.

The Chattahoochee River was quite important to the Confederacy as a line of communication. Above Chattachoochee, Florida, on the river, the Confederates concentrated upon building ships which could go downriver to the Gulf to raise the blockade. At Saffold in Early County, Georgia, a point thirty-three miles north of Chattahoochee, Florida, the Confederate Navy Yard was an installation for constructing and repairing vessels.

Northward from Saffold along the Chattahoochee were many plantation landings where cotton was ginned and stored for shipment. These stores of cotton were a major impetus for initial Confederate defense efforts. Fort Gaines, Georgia, was a fortified point along the Chattahoochee; and Eufaula, Alabama, and Georgetown, Georgia, were thriving towns at the time of the Civil War.

At the fall line on the Chattahoochee River is the city of Columbus, Georgia. In 1861 it had a population of about ten thousand and was already called the largest industrial center south of Richmond. In addition to having the river as a commercial outlet, it was connected with the West Point and Montgomery Railroad, which in turn provided connections with Montgomery, Atlanta, Augusta, Richmond, and other Confederate centers. Columbus was of particular strategic importance as long as the Confederate capital was in Montgomery.

Soon after the onset of war, Columbus industries began to expand and new industries were created to supply the Con-

federacy. Cotton mills turned out uniforms, tents, knapsacks, and shirts. Two factories produced shoes, and Columbus mills were soon working day and night to provide meal and flour for the Confederacy. A music store manufactured drums and fifes for the army in addition to oil cloth for belts and cartridge boxes.

The Columbus Naval Iron Works became by far the most important installation in Columbus. Chief Engineer James H. Warner came to Columbus in 1861 to consolidate industries that had been manufacturing equipment for steamboats. Confederate Ordnance Chief Josiah Gorgas called this Columbus industry the nucleus of the Confederate Ordnance Department. Throughout the war, this industry produced guns and engines for vessels under construction in all parts of the Confederacy. In addition, the iron-clad *Muscogee* and a small torpedo boat were constructed there. The Columbus Naval Iron Works kept the river steamboats in repair during the war and repaired the gunboat *Chattahoochee*.

Other Confederate industries in Columbus produced swords, rifles, harness, ammunition, paper, glass, peanut oil, and wagons. The city was also a major Quartermaster Depot and, later in the war, a Confederate hospital center. Columbus was at the center of strategic plans for both Confederacy and Union in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee River System. From the beginning of the war, Union blockaders knew of Columbus and its importance to the Confederacy, but from the first they were hampered in their efforts to reach the city.

Apalachicola was a station in the command of the East Gulf Blockading Squadron. This division of the Union blockade extended from Cape Canaveral on the eastern coast of Florida to St. Andrew's Bay, some forty-eight miles by land from Apalachicola. Apalachicola was considered one of the principal ports in west Florida, along with St. Andrew's, Deadman's Bay, St. Mark's, Cedar Keys, Tampa, and Pensacola.

The port of Apalachicola is separated from the Gulf by a series of islands. To the east, opposite the city of Carrabelle, is Dog Island, which is separated from St. George's Island by a channel known as East Pass. St. George's Island

extends southwest from the mainland opposite Apalachicola. Although it is now a narrow, continuous body of land, at the time of the Civil War the western tip of the island formed a separate body of land called Sand Island. During the war, Union blockading steamers piled coal there.

A narrow passage between Sand Island and St. Vincent's Island formed West Pass, the main entrance to Apalachicola in 1861. St. Vincent's Island lies in a north westerly position from St. George's, completing the semicircle of islands opposite Apalachicola. The westernmost tip is separated from Indian Peninsula on the mainland by Indian Pass. During the war, both St. Vincent's and St. George's Islands had sufficient vegetation to support herds of wild cattle and hogs but little else. Until well into the twentieth century they were rather desolate stretches of land where Union sailors had had their exercise liberty during the war. The two islands were held by the Confederates until December 1861.

The islands bounding Apalachicola border three rather shallow bodies of water: St. Vincent's Sound to the west, Apalachicola Bay adjacent to the city, and St. George's Sound to the east. The depth of these waters, along with the soundings at each of the three passes, varies a great deal. Before the war, ships which entered the bay from the Gulf stood off St. Vincent's Bar near West Pass and were relieved of cargo and re-laden by means of lighters from the wharves. Although the Union had hoped to use Apalachicola as a sheltered roadstead for vessels, they found the depth of the bay insufficient even for the blockading vessels that were stationed there. This was a continuing source of frustration to Union commanders off Apalachicola during the war.

Throughout the Civil War the Confederates who occupied the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee River System knew that the blockade was off Apalachicola. Like all of the South, they felt the strictures of the blockade, and they worked to build vessels that could move down the rivers to raise it. Meanwhile, the Union naval force off Apalachicola was aware of the agricultural and industrial production in the areas of Georgia, Florida, and Alabama drained by the river system. The Union lacked means of ascending the rivers in their heavy

draft vessels, and the South could not muster a naval force to raise the blockade. As that situation prevailed, each side made efforts to strike a telling blow at the other.

II. 1861: PREPARATIONS FOR WAR

The year 1861 was primarily a time of preparation for operations in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee area. Although Florida volunteers took possession of the United States Arsenal in the area in early January, the Confederate Government faced the responsibility of manning and defending the territory which they occupied. Although Lincoln declared a blockade of southern ports in April, the Gulf Blockading Squadron faced the task of making the blockade of the port of Apalachicola effective.

As a matter of Confederate policy the defense of its coast line was a consideration of great importance. The cotton producers requested protection of their stores at Apalachicola and the citizens requested protection of their homes, but their interests represented only one location along a four-thousand-mile coast line and adequate defense could not be supplied overnight. The Confederates were hampered by lack of men, lack of arms and ammunition, and lack of artillery and officers to direct its use.

While the Union dispatched vessels to Apalachicola in June, they were ill-equipped to enter and maneuver in the shallow coastal waters. Expeditions of small boats into the waters of Apalachicola Bay and St. Vincent's and St. George's Sounds went out of the protecting range of the batteries on blockading vessels. Lacking proper equipment to tow prizes to sea, the Union force was compelled to burn prizes which were captured near Apalachicola. They were left with the expedient of standing outside the waters adjacent to the port trying to apprehend blockade runners as they entered and left one of the four passages to Apalachicola.

Operations in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee area began on January 5, 1861, five days before the secession of Florida. Governor John Milton ordered a group of Florida volunteers to seize arms, ammunition, and buildings in the possession of the United States at the Arsenal at Chattahoochee, Florida. The mission was accomplished at seven o'clock the following morning when the Union force in command of a sergeant

offered no resistance.[1] The volunteers took possession of a large store of muskets, rifles, and pistols at the installation which, in July, 1862, was made an official Confederate Ordnance Station.[2]

Citizens of Alabama who had shipped cotton to Apalachicola and citizens of Apalachicola, fearing that war would be declared, began to call upon the Confederate Government for attention to the defense of the port. In March, a letter from General A. C. Gordon of Henry County was forwarded to Secretary of War Leroy Pope Walker. Gordon reported that no cotton was being sold or shipped at Apalachicola even though the amount stored there was valued at a million dollars (at ten cents per pound). Asking that the attention of the President be called to the lack of defense at Apalachicola, the General concluded:

> Something should be done, and that very soon, for the protection of that place and property. Alabama will suffer more than Florida will if that place should fall into the hands of an enemy. A large portion of the people of Southern Alabama ship their cotton to that port for market, and apprehend danger to their interests there.[3]

D. P. Holland, a resident of Montgomery, reported to Secretary of the Navy, Stephen R. Mallory, that the port of Apalachicola was without defense, having only two hundred muskets, sixty rifles, and no artillery of any kind. He added that the commercial importance of the city would probably make it "more than a point of ordinary interest to the United States Government. . . ."[4]

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[1]*The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, 1880-1901), Series I, vol. I, p. 332. Hereinafter cited as *Army O. R.*

[2]William A. Albaugh, III, and Edward N. Simmons, *Confederate Arms* (Harrisburg, 1957), 197. Although Albaugh and Simmons place the U. S. Arsenal at Apalachicola, *Army O. R.* and *Navy O. R.* maps designate U. S. Arsenal at Chattahoochee, Florida. A Union landing party reported on March 12, 1862, that "not a soldier, a cannon, or apparently any weapon of war" remained at Apalachicola. Confederate evacuation had been ordered earlier in the month and Apalachicola was not re-occupied by the Confederacy.

[3]*Army O. R.*, I, I, 448.

[4]*Ibid.*, 450.

The citizens of Apalachicola itself were more immediately interested in the defense of the port. They addressed a letter to Walker asking for help in its defense. Walker's private secretary answered their letter, assuring them of the Secretary's "deep concern" for their problem and informing them that "the proper defense of every assailable point of our coast is a matter most pressing upon the consideration of the Department." While adding that an artillery officer would be sent to Apalachicola as soon as possible, the secretary reminded the citizens "that the departments are but just organized, and that the pressure upon the Department of War is necessarily very great."[5] For the spring of 1861, therefore, the people of Apalachicola were left largely to their own devices. They organized themselves into four volunteer companies comprised of two-thirds of the men able to bear arms. By public subscription they purchased two thirty-four-pound cannons from the state of Florida.[6] The summer months, during which work at fortifying Apalachicola progressed very slowly, allowed the Union time to lay the foundation for its blockade of the port.

The Union blockading operations off Apalachicola began on June 11, 1861. Under orders from Flag-Officer William Mervine of the newly-organized Gulf Blockading Squadron, the *USS Montgomery* arrived off Apalachicola about noon of that day. The 787-ton screw steamer had a complement of sixty-six men and five guns under the command of Commander T. Darrah Shaw. Having no chart to direct his ship in the unmarked waters, Shaw directed a very careful entry through West Pass with frequent soundings. The vessel almost ran aground before coming into position to command the entrance to the port.[7]

Shaw's first mission was to announce the blockade. He had with him Mervine's announcement which read:

To all whom it may concern:

I, William Mervine, flag-officer, commanding the

[5] *Ibid.*, I, I, 485.
[6] *Ibid.*, I, VI, 286.
[7] *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion* (Washington, 1894-1922), Series I, vol. XVI, p. 546. Hereinafter cited as *Navy O. R.*

United States naval forces composing the Gulf Squadron, give notice that by virtue of the authority and power in me vested, and in pursuance of the proclamations of his Excellency the President of the United States, promulgated under the date of April 19 and 17, 1861, respectively, that an effective blockade of the port of Apalachicola, Florida, has been established and will be rigidly enforced and maintained against all vessels (public armed vessels of foreign powers alone excepted) which shall attempt to enter or depart from said port.[8]

To Mervine's statement Shaw added this further note:

I, T. Darrah Shaw, commanding the *USS Montgomery*, now off the port of Apalachicola, do hereby promulgate the enclosed declaration of blockade of the said port, made by William Mervine, esq., flag-officer, commanding U. S. Blockading forces in the Gulf of Mexico, under the following terms, viz:

No American coasting vessels are to be allowed to enter or depart from said port from the time of your arrival on the station. All foreign and neutral vessels now in the port of Apalachicola will be allowed ten days from the 11th of June, instant, for their departure.

All mercantile letters coming to me unsealed will be forwarded to their destination at the earliest practicable moment.[9]

Shaw was able to carry out the first part of his mission later in the afternoon of June 11. A pilot boat under a flag of truce brought a pilot and three men from Apalachicola to the *Montgomery*. The Commander answered their inquiry concerning his mission with a request that they deliver his and Mervine's announcements to the town. The master of the pilot boat agreed to carry copies to the mayor, the post master, the collector of customs, and the commercial reading rooms.[10]

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[8]*Ibid.*, 531-33.
[9]*Ibid.*, 544.
[10]*Ibid.*, 546.

The second part of Shaw's mission, that of establishing and maintaining a blockade of Apalachicola, was not so easily dispatched. In his first report to Mervine he pointed out the difficulties of the *Montgomery's* position. He cited the impossibility of preventing steamers from slipping unseen through the shoal water to the east and west of the *Montgomery's* station at the main entrance to the port. He further pointed out that most of the traffic at Apalachicola was made up of light draft steamers, and he requested that a vessel of that type be sent to aid his ship.[11]

The blockade at Apalachicola was not immediately strengthened, and the Confederates continued their efforts to reinforce their hold upon Apalachicola. With the help of citizens of Apalachicola they were erecting batteries on St. Vincent's Island. The lieutenant commanding the project sent a request to Governor John Milton of Florida for additional guns on August 10. The fortification had at that time four thirty-two-pounders, but the lieutenant requested four additional thirty-two-pounders and two twenty-four-pounders for the defense of the road to St. Joseph's. He pointed out the "exceedingly small supply of ammunition" and the "immediate need for 1,000 friction primers."[12]

After receiving the report, Governor Milton went to inspect the fortifications on St. Vincent's. He wrote to the Secretary of War on August 16 asking that an artillery officer be sent to aid the force at Apalachicola. The Governer concluded his request:

> Of all places in this State Apalachicola is most important to the commercial interests of Georgia, Alabama, and Florida, and at present it is in a condition almost defenseless. Now is the time to prepare for its defense. A few weeks hence may be too late.[13]

The Governor's message had not reached the Secretary of War before the blockade off Apalachicola was strengthened.

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[11] *Ibid.*, 547.

[12] *Army O. R.*, I, I, 472.

[13] *Ibid.*, 471-72.

It is possible that the impetus which sent the *USS R. R. Cuyler* to Apalachicola was touched off in the city itself. On July 30 a citizen of Lansingburgh, New York, wrote a letter to the Secretary of State which was forwarded to Gideon Welles in the Department of the Navy who sent it to Flag-Officer Mervine on August 5. The information contained in this circuitously routed message came from a woman in Apalachicola who had written to her uncle in Lansingburgh. She told him that the blockade had been a farce in that one small vessel guarded four passages from Apalachicola to the Gulf, making it rather easy for vessels to escape to sea. The woman's directions to her uncle that he reply to her letter through a firm in New York City indicated to the Union that there was still communication by sea with Apalachicola. Strengthening the blockade at that point, it was thought, might also "diminish Lord Lyon's instances of ineffectual blockade."[14] Whether or not the department acted on the strength of this intelligence is not stated, but it was exactly two weeks after Welles sent his message to Mervine that the *Cuyler* joined the *Montgomery* off Apalachicola.

The addition of the *Cuyler*, a twelve-hundred-ton screw steamer with 111 men and ten guns, tripled the number of men and guns stationed at Apalachicola. Within ten days Captain F. B. Ellison had action to report at his new station. The Union force was still hampered, however, by the lack of vessels and equipment suitable for operation in the shallow water of the area. These circumstances served to dim the accomplishment of the blockading force in capturing its first prize vessel.

On the night of August 26, five boats from the *Cuyler* and the *Montgomery* were sent on a reconnaissance mission toward a large ship at anchor in Apalachicola Bay. The Union force discovered the ship *Finland* and the schooner *New Plan* and were able to capture the two vessels without opposition. Since the *New Plan's* papers were in order, it was released after the crew had taken the oath of allegiance to the United States.

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[14]*Navy O. R.*, I, XVI, 613.

The *Finland,* however, was thought a lawful prize and the Union seamen began efforts to remove it from the bay. They found the sails and spars housed and spent all night bending sails and sending spars aloft. At dawn they began, against unfavorable winds and tides, to attempt towing their prize to the Union blockading station at East Pass. Nightfall found the *Finland* grounded on St. Vincent's Bar, four miles from the Union anchorage, and forty men were left behind to free the ship.[15]

Efforts to tow the *Finland* from the bar lasted all night. At dawn a steamer with a large schooner in tow appeared heading into Apalachicola and steered directly toward the Union prize. Unable to free the *Finland* from the bar and unable to call upon the *Cuyler* or *Montgomery* for defense, the seamen had to fire the *Finland* and take to their boats.[16] So precarious was the position of the Union seamen that they were routed by nine men from the Apalachicola Guards who came upon the scene in a schooner towed by a steamer. That detachment boarded the burning *Finland* and recovered the life boats and a few useful articles that could be salvaged.[17]

Though the shots from the Apalachicola riflemen had caused no injury, Ellison recorded an injury to their pride that the Union inability to enter the Bay allowed the "rebels to make this demonstration with impunity."[18] Ellison also deplored the loss of the *Finland* as a prize, for he had planned to send her to New York for adjudication. Had the Union vessels been able to enter the Bay, they could have protected the prize with their batteries against the threat of the steamer and schooner. Had they had kedge anchors and hausers they might have been able to operate more effectively. He added that with a steamer or gunboat of twelve foot draft or less the Union force could have captured the two Confederate vessels easily. Nevertheless, the incident caused increased concern among the Confederates on St. Vincent's.

Ten days after the *Finland* incident, Confederate Secretary of the Navy Mallory forwarded to Secretary of War Walker

[15]Eufaula *Spirit of the South,* September 10, 1861.
[16]*Navy O. R.,* I, XVI, 646-47.
[17]Eufaula *Spirit of the South,* September 10, 1861.
[18]*Navy O. R.,* I, XVI, 646-47.

a dispatch from the garrison on St. Vincent's. The commander of the garrison reported his fear that the Union planned to send light draft steamers into the Bay to attack and burn Apalachicola. To meet the threat he requested powder, primers, and artillerists. In a interchange of messages the same day, Walker and Mallory agreed that Navy Lieutenant Augustus McLaughlin would be sent to Apalachicola with shells, shot, and guns if the War Department would supply two thousand pounds of powder, transportation, and two additional guns. Tredegar Iron Works promised two thirty-two-pounders within a short time, and ten days later, September 16, a midshipman was dispatched from Richmond to New Orleans and Apalachicola to make delivery.[19]

These efforts failed to satisfy the citizens of Apalachicola, however, and they wrote to the Secretary of War on October 1, listing their grievances. They pointed out that they had bought guns, sent requests to Richmond for attention to their needs, helped construct fortifications on St. Vincent's, and had organized themselves into volunteer companies. When the department had sent men and guns to their aid, the colonel in command had removed the battery from the city to St. Vincent's Island. This left the city itself with only one artillery company and two companies of undrilled infantry. Even though the St. Vincent battery had four short and two long thirty-two-pounders, the approaches to Apalachicola by land and through East Pass were left unguarded. This left the residents of Apalachicola, after nine months of southern occupation, with a "deep sense of insecurity, and anxiety for the safety and protection of their families and property."[20]

While the Confederates at Apalachicola made immediate efforts for the defense of the port itself, plans were laid farther northward in the river system for offensive measures to meet the Union blockade. After delivering cannons, ammunition, and instructions to the Apalachicola batteries, Lieutenant McLaughlin moved up the river to confer with Chief Engineer James H. Warner, who had been sent to Columbus, Georgia, to lease private machine works and organize them for the use of the Confederate Navy.

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[19] *Ibid.*, 838-39.

[20] *Army O. R.*, I, VI, 286-87.

Warner and McLaughlin went to Saffold, Early County, Georgia, about 150 miles south of Columbus on the Chattahoochee, to negotiate a contract with David S. Johnston for the construction of a wooden gunboat. They signed an agreement on October 19, 1861, in which Johnston agreed to construct the vessel in 120 days for the sum of $47,500. The gunboat was to be 130 feet long, thirty feet across the beam, and 10 feet deep. Two engines providing a fire surface of 800 feet were to power two propellers.[21]

Thus, the first really significant efforts in the Confederate naval operations of the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee river system were begun. However well-laid these plans were, progress in their actual execution was to be negligible during the remainder of 1861. Warner was transferred to Pensacola to design the machinery for the *Mississippi*, an assignment which lasted until the spring of 1862.[22] Work on the gunboat went many months past the 120 days specified in the contract.

Meanwhile, the Union blockading force continued to labor under the disadvantages of operations in the shallow coastal waters. The commander of the *Cuyler* was much disturbed by his inability to engage shallow draft vessels which passed near his position. In reporting one such instance on September 13 he asked that his superior consider "the size and draft of water of his ship, without a launch or boats sufficiently large to carry out an anchor, without even a kedge on board, or any of the ordinary means and applicances for getting the ship off, in the event of grounding. . . ."[23] Within a month the flag-officer of the Gulf Blockading Squadron took action to remedy the situation by sending the *Marion* to relieve the *Cuyler*. A month later the *Hatteras* was sent to relieve the *Montgomery*.

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[21]P. Klein, Reporter, *Report of Evidence Taken Before Joint Special Committee of Both Houses of Confederate Congress to Investigate Affairs of Navy Department* (Richmond, n.d.), 440-41. Although the vessel is not named in the contract it is most probably the gunboat *Chattahoochee*. Lt. A. F. Crossman wrote to Gideon Welles on December 17, 1862, "The Navy Yard, where the rebel gunboat was built and where three more gunboats are building is only 150 miles to the southward from Columbus." *Navy O. R.*, I, XVII, 347-48.

[22]Diffie William Standard, *Columbus, Georgia, in the Confederacy*, (New York, 1954), 43.

[23]*Navy O. R.*, I, XVI, 669.

This new combination of vessels for the Apalachicola blockade was more suited to the area of operations. The *Hatteras,* commanded by Commander George F. Emmons, was an eleven hundred-ton side-wheel steamer with a complement of 101 men and five guns. The *Marion,* commanded by Lieutenant George W. Doty, was a 566-ton sloop carrying eighty men and fourteen guns. Besides this increase of maneuverability off Apalachicola, there was a slight increase in strength, four men and four guns more than the combined strength of the *Montgomery* and the *Cuyler.*

While the *Marion* and the *Hatteras* reported no captures during their first weeks of duty, the blockade of Apalachicola nevertheless had become more effective. Of five schooners that cleared the port in late November, only one, the *W. P. Benson,* returned safely — and it was captured on its second run out. The *W. A. Rain* was taken with a cargo of cotton on the outward voyage. The *Onward, Franklin,* and *Phoenix* were able to clear the port with cotton and turpentine, but they were all captured on their return voyages.[24] A report of the harbor collector concerning this traffic was sufficient to set off a rapid exchange of telegrams among Governor Milton, Secretary Mallory, and Secretary of War Judah P. Benjamin.

On November 25, 1861, Milton, signing himself "Governor and Commander in Chief," ordered Colonel R. F. Floyd at Apalachicola to allow no vessel with cotton to leave the port. He ordered any vessel attempting to do so sunk and any person attempting to ship cotton imprisoned. Floyd reported two days later that he had ordered three hundred bales of cotton back up the river and that he had forbidden shipment of turpentine as well. On the twenty-ninth Milton wired Mallory for an opinion regarding the shipment of turpentine. His brief answer was, "I know of no objections to the departure of the vessels." Mallory had evidently asked the opinion of Benjamin on the matter, for he telegraphed Milton the same day (November 30):

> I learned that vessels at Apalachicola are detained from going to sea with cargo by some unknown military authority. It is not lawful nor is it the policy of the Govern-

[24] *Ibid.,* 855-56.

ment to prevent the departure of vessels with cargo, unless there is danger of their capture by a blockading vessel of the enemy.[25]

On December 5 he modified the concluding subordinate clause of his message, saying that there was no law or reason to prevent vessels from running the blockade with cotton "unless there is reason to believe the cotton is really intended for the enemy under the guise of neutral."[26]

For the remainder of December, 1861, Apalachicola remained quiet. Doty reported that he thought the garrison on St. Vincent's was withdrawn about December 20 and Emmons' reconnaissance a week later indicated that only a picket guard was left at the dismantled fort.[27] Emmons heard heavy guns firing in the town of Apalachicola, but when he surveyed the city from the seventy-seven-foot light house on St. George's, all appeared quiet and he "saw nothing afloat inviting attack."[28]

Writing many years after the war, S. P. Richardson who had served the Confederacy at Apalachicola officially as an Army major and unofficially as a chaplain wrote that there were about twelve hundred men at Apalachicola at the end of 1861. According to his account, they did not feel extreme pressure from the Union blockade. In fact the approach to military life which he described seems rather casual.

He had been urged by the men of his congregation to enter the Army as a chaplain whereupon he jestingly told them that he would go only if they elected him major so that he could "command them and preach too." To his astonishment "they met and elected me major, and I had to go; for here came my commission, and with it orders to Apalachicola."

Life in the garrison was not altogether unpleasant for the Confederates. Richardson describes the following incident:

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[25] *Ibid.*, 856-57.
[26] *Ibid.*, 857.
[27] *Ibid.*, I, XVII, 121.
[28] *Ibid.*, 7.

> The general and all the field officers but myself drank. We had fine bands and they frequently serenaded us. . . . One day the Lieutenant Colonel came to me and said that I loved music and that the band had to be treated. I told him that I would not treat my father if he were to rise from the dead; but to show him that it was not money but principle with me, I said that if he would serenade me as a Christian I would treat them as Christian.

A band came with a singer to Richardson's quarters one evening and played "Before Jehovah's awful throne, ye nations bow with sacred joy" and he afterward treated them with oysters.[29] Richardson gave only passing mention to the garrison's military duties, concluding "we finally had to abandon the place."

Despite Confederate efforts to protect Apalachicola, the end of 1861 found them withdrawn from their fort on St. Vincent's back into the city where they had begun defense preparation the previous spring. Although the blockade of the city had been greatly hampered by the use of vessels unsuitable for the area, traffic to and from the port had been drastically reduced. The Confederate hold on Apalachicola in 1862 was to be short-lived; and, as the Union blockade tightened, their offensive and defensive plans were to be centered to the north along the river. Perhaps the contest between the two forces in 1861 can be best condensed into these terms: The story of that year is not told in terms of what injury each force did to the other but rather in terms of each one's inability to strike a decisive blow because of factors which hampered its effective operation.

[29]S. P. Richardson, *Light and Shadows of an Itinerant Life* (Nashville, 1901), 173.

III. 1862: UNION CONTROL OF APALACHICOLA AND CONFEDERATE DEFENSE OF THE APALACHICOLA RIVER

Since the contest for the city of Apalachicola was ended by default early in the year 1862, this second year of the war brought a change in the nature of operations in the area. Withdrawal of the Confederates from Apalachicola proper, coupled with an increased concentration of Union vessels at that point, brought an improvement in the effect of the blockade and an extension of blockading operations. The emphasis of Confederate efforts was shifted up the Apalachicola River. In time, and with increased official attention to that area, they were able to expand their efforts, even though the offensive plan of launching the *Chattahoochee* gunboat and the defensive plan of obstructing the Apalachicola were somewhat at variance.

Early in 1862 Union communications with the mainland near the blockading stations improved, and the officers in command were able to gather rather complete intelligence on conditions in the area. After the Confederates withdrew up the river in March, blockading operations were extended to expeditions up the Apalachicola in search of vessels anchored there. By the end of the year the blockading force had been more than doubled. Reports of the Union officers reflected an increased interest in conditions inland and a heightened appreciation of the strategic importance of Apalachicola as a base of operations for expeditions inland.

As they had been in 1861, Confederate officials were plagued by concerns for defense. They were hampered by a lack of coordination and cooperation among governmental, military, naval, and civilian agencies. Although construction had begun at Safford, Georgia, on gunboats, the Navy was disturbed by the delays of the private contractor. The military officials' plans to lay obstructions in the Apalachicola River were impeded by the absence of an engineering officer to make a survey of possible sites. Although a very capable engineer was sent to perform the task, he gave up after being unable to obtain manpower from the civilian population or supplies from the Engineering Department. When commissioners in

Columbus, Georgia, tried to take matters into their own hands and arrange for an obstruction to be sunk, Governor Milton of Florida raised objections.

Late in the year, at the request of the governors Joseph E. Brown of Georgia, John Milton of Florida, and John G. Shorter of Alabama, the Military District of Middle Florida was created. Under the command of General Howell Cobb, this measure brought a somewhat greater degree of coordination and effectiveness into the Confederate operations. By the end of the year the obstructions had been sunk and the nearly-completed gunboat *Chattahoochee* had served as a protecting battery to the group at work on the obstructions. While the obstructions provided immediate defense, they curtailed the *Chattahoochee's* offensive threat to the blockading squadron along the coast.

The Confederate retreat from St. Vincent's Island evidently opened the way for increased activity by the blockading force in early 1862. The commander of the *Sagamore*, which replaced the *Hatteras*, reported action which, though not spectacular, indicated a growing agressiveness on the part of the Union. On January 18 a part of the *Sagamore's* crew of seventy-eight landed on St. Vincent's and, finding the batteries dismantled, destroyed the barracks and other buildings which the Confederates had constructed there.[1] On the seventh of February another boat expedition landed on the coast near Apalachicola and destroyed two small sloops and two large sloops which had been hauled ashore for repairs.[2]

Lieutenant George W. Doty of the *Marion* had reports of a different nature to make during February. He supplied Flag-officer Mervine with intelligence concerning the traffic in Apalachicola Bay and in the Apalachicola River. From refugees he learned something of military and commercial conditions within the city of Apalachicola.

According to Doty's report, Confederate harbor operations consisted of patrols made by several small, unarmed sloops. These carried crews of about ten men who reported blockade

[1]*Navy O. R.*, I, XVI, 54.
[2]*Ibid.*, 124.

conditions to larger vessels anchored up the Apalachicola River. There were rumored to be several schooners anchored about five miles above the city in Jackson River.[3] The schooner *Kate L. Bruce* lay at anchor in Apalachicola five months after she had run in a cargo of fruit from Havana. Three of the eight river steamers in the waters lay at Apalachicola in order to tow schooners to the outlets to the Gulf. The steamer *Wave* was reported to have left for Saffold to be converted into a gunboat.

Doty learned that means of evading the blockade and supplying Apalachicola had been developed. Vessels landed cargo at Bear Creek off St. Andrew's Bay and transported it overland to Ochesee, Florida, twelve miles south of Chattahoochee. River steamers then transported supplies ninety-five miles down river to Apalachicola. Coffee was transported in this way in late January and cotton was sent from Apalachicola to load the vessel for the return voyage.

Military conditions in Apalachicola were described as being very poor. The military post consisted of about 450 soldiers, mostly citizens of Apalachicola who were armed with flintlock muskets and shotguns. Because of the scarcity of arms, one company was reportedly unarmed. Other defenses consisted of twelve light cannons mounted upon earthworks which had been erected 150 yards from shore. They extended for five hundred yards from southwest to northeast before the town.

The city of Apalachicola had begun to feel the restrictions of the blockade. Most of the stores had been closed and many of the citizens had moved inland. Despite the fact that coffee had been landed at St. Andrew's, the Apalachicola price was seventy-five cents per pound. Salt, which was produced at extensive salt works on Cape San Blas, sold for five dollars per half bushel.[4]

Conditions in Apalachicola were further described by Commander H. S. Stellwagen of the *Mercedita,* a steamer with nine

[3]Doty's report names the anchorage as Owl Creek. This place, however, is twenty-two miles up river from Apalachicola. Jackson River is just more than five miles, according to navigation charts prepared by U. S. Army Corps of Engineers.
[4]*Ibid.*, 120-21.

guns and 135 men which replaced the *Marion* on March 12. He made additions to the intelligence which Doty had collected, giving an indication that Apalachicola was still dominated by secessionist sentiment. Also he gathered information about fortifications and naval construction up the river.

Stellwagen received reports that Apalachicola had been evacuated on March 14, two days after his arrival there. A boat expedition sent to confirm the information found "not a soldier, a cannon, or apparently any weapon of war" left there. The civilian population had been ordered away by Governor Milton and Stellwagen included the description which refugees had given him of the operation:

> The exodus of the poor frightened women and children is represented by the negroes as heart rending. Taken away at the shortest notice, in a storm, thrown ashore on the low bluffs many miles up the river, with their house hold goods, furniture, and everything they could snatch up in their flight, and left all night in a deluge of rain, the river rising and threatening to carry them away, with scarcely any shelter for the weak and sick, there most of them laid in the mud, almost perishing with cold, until the latter part of the next day, when they were taken away by rafts and flats over the deluged country.[5]

Left in the town were a group of five or six hundred, among them members of about a dozen white families, a few slaves, and some Spanish fishermen.

A boat was sent from the *Mercedita* to request that the city be surrendered without opposition in order that it might be spared naval bombardment. The Union seamen found in the town no one in authority to make the surrender or ask for terms. Nevertheless, the secessionists left at Apalachicola still had means at their disposal to prevent the surrender of the city. They threatened to starve any who expressed Union sentiments. They further threatened to burn the entire town should any of the citizens hold conference with members of the blockading force. Since the *Mercedita* could not anchor near the city, the commander had no means of preventing the seces-

[5]*Ibid.*, 193-94.

sionists from carrying out their threats at night. He therefore delayed pressing his advantage for a few days.[6]

On March 30 Stellwagen began planning a raid upon Apalachicola. He sent a gig to the *Sagamore* which was stationed at East Pass thirty miles away and asked that she join the *Mercedita.* The next day both ships began preparing their small boats for the expedition. Six of the boats, one of them armed with a howitzer, were to set out at night past the town and up the river, followed at daylight by two gigs.

The six boats left the Union steamers at nine o'clock on the night of April 2, but because of the strong current and darkness they were forced to anchor until daybreak. Soon after first light they captured the *Octavia,* a blockade runner anchored at Apalachicola. Three of the boats remained there while the remaining three pulled up the river. Seven miles upstream they captured the schooner *New Island* at anchor in a small creek. After towing their prize into mid-stream, the expedition continued up the river where they were able to take the schooner *Floyd,* two pilot boats, and the schooner *Rose* which was laden with cotton. They then set about towing their prizes to Apalachicola, meeting no opposition during the entire operation.

Although the Union force had been able to move at will in Apalachicola Bay and in the river near the city, they faced the old problem of freeing their prizes from the harbor. Only the *Rose* and the *Octavia* were cleared. The *New Island* and the two pilot boats were grounded in seven feet of water so Stellwagen ordered them burned. The remainder of the captured boats were left for the people of Apalachicola to use for fishing.[7]

Late in the afternoon of April 3, Stellwagen gathered his entire force to proceed to the landing at Apalachicola. There he was met by most of the residents with whom he conducted,

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[6]*Ibid.*, 205. Letters received by the Secretary of the Navy from Commanding Officers of Squadrons, 1841-1886, East Gulf Blockading Squadron, 1862-1865, National Archives Microcopy Number 89, Roll 197, p. 82. Hereinafter cited as National Archives Microcopy 89.

[7]*Ibid.*, 204.

according to his own account, a very effective interview. He began by saying:

> My countrymen, for even you who are engaged in this unholy, unnatural war against our Government are my fellow-countrymen, we come not to injure the defenseless, or women and children; I like the people of the South, though I hate secession and rebellion, which have brought such calamities and misery upon all parts of our late happy land.

The citizens answered, "we have had no part in it." "The innocent must suffer with the guilty."[8]

After the introductory remarks, Stellwagen told the people that he had brought his force to show them that the blockading crew had ample means for the use of force against them. Knowing of their distress, however, he had decided to treat the city mercifully, offering safety to all who would take the oath of allegiance to the United States. Leaving them all the fishing and oyster boats unharmed, he promised that they could fish and oyster in the Bay safely as long as there was no firing upon Union vessels, no aid for blockade runners, or any harboring of soldiers in the town. Any of these violations would bring severe punishment.

Continuing in his talk with the group, Stellwagen pointed to the Confederate sand batteries and said:

> See what protectors your soldiers are; look at the fort built in the midst of your houses, so that a few shells even from boat guns at them would be sure to burn your town. (Laughter and cries, 'Oh, they're no great soldiers; there's no engineers amongst them!')

He then informed them of Union successes at Fort Henry, Tennessee; Fort Donelson, Tennessee; Columbus, Kentucky; and Nashville, Tennessee. After this reference to Union strength he concluded by telling the people of Apalachicola that he did not require their help if it would endanger them. He again reminded them that actions against his vessels would result in severe retaliation.[9]

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[8] *Ibid.*, 203.
[9] *Ibid.*

Stellwagen knew at that time that the Confederate efforts for the war in his area of command had been increased. Refugees had informed him of the small garrison stationed on Ricko's Bluff fifty-seven miles up the river and of a larger force at Johnston's (Saffold), thirty-three miles up the Chattahoochee River from Chattahoochee, Florida. Although he also knew that a gunboat was under construction there, his mention of these facts was brief and he seemed to accord them little importance.

Actually the Confederate war efforts along the Chattahoochee were well underway by the second spring of the war. The Navy Yard at Saffold was at work upon the gunboat *Chattahoochee* and Columbus, Georgia, was becoming increasingly important to the Confederacy. The *Mobile Daily Advertiser and Register* reported that by April, 1862, the Columbus Naval Iron Works cast six and finished four cannons each week.[10] The installation was able to supply Saffold with machinery and necessary hardware, shipping it by raft down the Chattahoochee to the Landing Yard a short distance upriver from Johnston's Navy Yard.[11]

The Saffold Navy Yard reflected three policies of the Confederate Navy which Secretary Mallory had expressed to the Committee on Naval Affairs during the early months of the war. It was near stands of live oak and pine which were useful as ships' timber. Work was carried on there by a civilian contractor, D. S. Johnston, thus fostering private industry. Finally, the gunboat *Chattahoochee* satisfied Mallory's standards for an effective vessel. He had reported to the Committee:

> Small propeller ships, with great speed, lightly armed with [rifled] guns, must soon become, as the light artillery and rifles of the deep, a most destructive element in naval warfare.[12]

These policies were not as smoothly carried out as they had been stated, for there was a lack of trained men to work on

[10]*Mobile Daily Advertiser and Register,* April 9, 1862.
[11]Undated clipping formerly in possession of D. H. McDowell, Blakely, Georgia.
[12]*Navy O. R.*, II, II, 53.

the vessel and many delays arose which displeased the Department of the Navy.

One Confederate report of early 1862 said that work on the gunboats was at a standstill because of the lack of ship's carpenters. On March 4 this advertisement appeared in the *Columbus Daily Sun:*

HANDS WANTED
AT THE
C. S. NAVY YARD
LOCATED ON THE
CHATTAHOOCHEE RIVER
AT SAFFOLD, EARLY COUNTY, GEORGIA
TO BUILD GUNBOATS

Twenty ships' carpenters, joiners, caulkers, and hands accustomed to ship and steamboat work are wanted at the Confederate States Navy Yard to work on gunboats. . . . as several gunboats are under contract steady employment and good wages. All hands employed at the Confederate States Navy Yard are exempt from military duty and anyone in the Army can be furloughed to work there.

D. S. Johnston[13]

Johnston employed, in addition to the labor he recruited, a working force of eighty-four slaves.[14] The demand for trained workers was to increase, for on March 25, 1862, William O. Saffold and his son, Adam G. Saffold, signed a contract with Lieutenant McLaughlin for the construction of two gunboats.

The Saffold-McLaughlin contract specified that the vessels should be 106 feet long, eighteen feet wide, and eight feet deep. Each was to have a single, back-acting propeller and seven hundred feet of fire surface. Delivery of the two gunboats was to be made on July 1, 1862, for the sum of $50,000.[15]

[13]*Columbus Daily Sun*, March 4, 1862.

[14]According to Early Co. Deed Book D and Will Book L, Johnson's Navy Yard was located on lots 322 and 321, bordering the Chattahoochee a mile south of the point where U. S. highway 84 crosses the river.

[15]P. Klein, *op. cit.*, 450-51.

McLaughlin evidently was not pleased with the progress of the work at Saffold. In June, he directed the master of the *Kate L. Bruce* to stop at Johnston's on his next trip down the Chattahoochee in order to consult the master carpenter about progress on the gunboat. McLaughlin said that the Navy Department had been "very much annoyed at the manner in which things have been conducted" there. Department officials suspected that the contractor was more interested in developing facilities which would benefit his private business than in making sacrifices to advance the southern cause. The Navy Department, therefore, wanted a full report on the operation and a probable date for the gunboat's launching.[16]

A month later, Lt. Catesby ap R. Jones, former executive officer of the *Virginia*, was ordered to Columbus, Georgia, to assume command of the "gunboat *Chattahoochee* about being completed near that place."[17] Jones evidently proceeded to Saffold; for three weeks after the Navy Department ordered him to Columbus, a friend addressed a letter to him at Saffold, Early County, Georgia. He replied from Saffold on October 1, 1862, explaining that his delay in writing had been caused by his work in arming the gunboat *Chattahoochee*.[18]

Jones' new command was a three-masted, squared-rigged schooner which measured about 130 feet from bowsprit to stern. The vessel was thirty feet across the beam; and, most important, it drew only five feet fore and eight feet aft. With two propellers driven by two steam engines of a thirty-six-inch bore and twenty-four-inch stroke, it was capable of a speed of twelve knots.[19]

In comparison with other Confederate gunboats, the *Chattahoochee* might be termed a first class gunboat. A first class gunboat was described as being about 150 feet long with a thirty-four-foot beam and an eight to ten-foot draft. The cost of a vessel meeting those specifications was estimated at $45,000 to $50,000.[20]

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[16]*Navy O. R.*, II, II, 208.
[17]*Ibid.*, I, XVII, 864; Columbus was the official naval station nearest Saffold.
[18]*Ibid.*, I, VII, 62.
[19]*Ibid.*, I, XVII, 421.
[20]*Columbus Daily Sun*, April 27, 1862, quoting the *Charleston Courier*.

The battery which Jones arranged for placement on board the *Chattahoochee* consisted of six guns, one forward and one aft on pivots and four broadside on trucks.[21] The best of these guns was a nine-inch Dahlgren which was mounted on a pivot. The Dahlgren was a smooth bore, cast solid and bored out. Captain Henry Wise of the U.S. Naval Ordnance Bureau said that the Dahlgren had a distribution of metal to give it "the very best form in which a gun can be made to attain the greatest strength." This type of gun had been used by the United States Navy prior to the war and in the opinion of Admiral DuPont there was "relatively none better."[22]

The thirty-two-pound rifled piece was also a valuable weapon. Matthew Fontaine Maury said of the rifled cannon, "[It] will send as far and hit as hard when fired from the smallest boat as it will when fired from the largest ship."[23] Even though the rifled cannon had a greater range and accuracy, the tendency of the spinning projectile to ricochet on water made it less effective than the Dahlgren in naval action.[24]

The remainder of the *Chattahoochee's* battery was made up of four thirty-two-pounders, which were mounted broadside. They were six-inch smooth bore cannon, forty-two hundred-weight. This type of gun had an elevation of five degrees and a point blank range of 313 yards.[25]

The *Chattahoochee* required a complement of 110 to 120 crew members. Seventy-eight men were required to man the guns, seventeen each for the Dahlgren and rifle and eleven each for the thirty-two pounders. The magazine, passage, runner, and scuttles required ten men; the shell room required six. Six men manned the wheel, con, signals, lead, and pumps. A lieutenant commanding and a lieutenant, a master, four midshipmen, a boatswain, a gunner, an assistant paymaster, and an assistant surgeon comprised the staff of officers. There

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[21] John Thomas Scharf, *History of the Confederate States Navy* (New York, 1887), 616.

[22] *Report on Conduct of the War, Second Session Thirty-Eighth Congress* (Washington, 1865), I, 23.

[23] *Navy* O. R., II, II, 100.

[24] *Report on Conduct of the War*, I, 23.

[25] Albert Mauncy, *Artillery through the Ages* (Washington, 1949), 52.

was also a chief engineer with three assistants and about seven firemen.[26]

In assembling a crew, Jones recruited Lieutenant George W. Gift from the CSS *Arkansas,* an Annapolis graduate and an officer with whom he had served in the U. S. Navy. When Gift arrived at Saffold to take his position on the *Chattahoochee,* he wrote that he was pleased with his fellow officers, "some of them . . . sons of the old aristocracy, who are carrying on the traditions creditably."

Of the crew of the *Chattahoochee* Gift wrote:

> Among the seamen of this ship, there is not one in ten, who has a relative in the Confederacy: their shipmates of today are their only friends. If one dies, we put him away according to military form; some sinner like myself reading the burial service; a head board marks his resting place for a few years, and then all is oblivion.[27]

Gift went on to muse about whether mothers and sisters in the Scandanavian countries and along the Rhine prayed for "these wayward and erratic creatures" that they be kept safe from harm.[28]

Life aboard the *Chattahoochee* was not all a matter of working to ready the ship for service. There was social life in the surrounding country. Mr. and Mrs. D. S. Johnston frequently had the officers to their home along with young ladies from the neighborhood. Great favorites among the officers were the Shackelford sisters from "The Pines," a nearby plantation. There were the twins Hannah and Georgia and, just older than they, Ellen whom George Gift later married.

Jones and Gift returned the Johnston's hospitality by having the ladies of the neighborhood visit the *Chattahoochee.* They took their guests on a tour of the ship and later served strawberries, cream, and pound cake supplied by Mrs. Shackle-

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[26]*Navy O. R.*, I, XVII, 700.

[27]Harriet Gift Castlen, *Hope Bids Me Onward* (Savannah, Georgia, 1945), 97. This is a biography compiled from letters written by George Gift to his wife.

[28]*Ibid.*, 98.

ford. The officers also decorated their quarters with flowers from "The Pines."[29]

Many indications are given that the *Chattahoochee* was intended for service against the Union blockade of Apalachicola. Like the blockade runners, the vessel was painted black and fitted out with sail and steam. Jones must have expressed the hope that the gunboat would see active service in the Gulf, for a comrade concluded a letter addressed to him at Saffold "with hopes that you may not only be successful in getting out to sea, but successful in worrying the Yankees when you get out."[30] Construction on the *Chattahoochee,* however, had been slow, and the loss of Apalachicola had forced the Confederacy to begin plans for obstructing the river.

At the time the Union gained control of the port of Apalachicola, the river northward was defended only by a battery of ten guns at Ricko's Bluff, fifty-seven miles north of the city and forty-nine miles south of Chattahoochee, Florida. This was obviously inadequate protection for an area where, according to a report by General Joseph Finegan, eighty thousand bales of cotton were stored in April of 1862.

> . . . the general solicitude felt by the citizens of Columbus in the protection of the Chattahoochee River, and to the notoriously inefficient character of defense thereon render it . . . proper that we should endeavor to draw such attention to this subject from official quarters as will insure for a higher degree of security against federal invasion from that direction than we now enjoy.[31]

To this end, the council commissioned Alfred Iverson to confer with the Secretary of War in order to obtain adequate defenses.

Early in May, Secretary of War George W. Randolph ordered General John C. Pemberton to assign a competent engineer to make a survey of the Apalachicola to determine the most advantageous place for sinking an obstruction. In giving

[29]*Ibid.,* 88.
[30]*Ibid.,* VII, 62.
[31]Minutes of the Columbus City Council, April 28, 1862.

the order, Randolph made this statement of the Department's policy:

> The introduction of small iron-clad steamers into coast operations of the enemy renders it necessary to change our plans of river defense and to rely upon obstructions more than we have heretofore. [32]

As has been the case with Mallory's policy regarding the construction of gunboats, Randolph's statement of river defense policy was followed by difficulty in executing the policy.

The first difficulty was that Pemberton had no engineer to make a survey of the river. He went himself, however, to make observations of the Apalachicola and made a report to Inspector General Samuel Cooper. On the basis of his observations, he considered Fort Gadsden, a point twenty miles north of Apalachicola, a possible site.[33]

Later in May, Pemberton obtained the services of a very capable engineer, William R. Boggs, who began his expedition at Columbus and continued downriver to Fort Gadsden. With the Company assigned him he was able to make a brief voyage to Apalachicola.[34]

Boggs was displeased with conditions at the Chattahoochee Arsenal, finding no guard stationed at the Arsenal landing to guard supplies. Conditions farther down the Apalachicola were no better, for he recorded in his memoirs:

> At Ricko's Bluff I found an effort being made to plant a battery; the guns were on top of a bluff at least three hundred feet above the river, with a range of only half a mile. The most of the cotton was some twenty miles further down the river. Near it was a small battery of field artillery, behind an epaulment, supported by a battalion of infantry. Owing to a deep creek coming in to a

[32] *Army O. R.*, I, XIV, 493.
[33] *Ibid.*, 498-99.
[34] James L. Nichols, *Confederate Engineers* (Number 5 in *Confederate Centennial Studies*, ed. W. Stanley Hoole, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1957), 10. Upon his graduation from West Point in 1853, Boggs had ranked fourth in his class and was among the first group whom Jefferson Davis appointed to the Department of Engineers.

very short range in their rear, the position was untenable. Below this point the Federals were in full possession.[35]

In reporting to Pemberton, Boggs agreed that Fort Gadsden offered a good position for the obstruction. He observed that it was elevated above the river with good roads to the rear and a long, straight road in front of the position. The banks on either side of the river were very swampy and would offer an obstacle for any land force attempting to attack the fort. The river at that point was of average width and depth; therefore, Boggs suggested that cribs like those that had been used at Savannah, Georgia, be sunk there.

Fort Gadsden was actually the most southerly point on the Apalachicola where an obstruction would have been practical, for below that point the river widened considerably. It presented the disadvantage of being an unhealthy location for quartering troops, but despite this observation, Boggs asked Pemberton to supply Fort Gadsden with two eight-inch columbiads with carriages, platforms, and other implements.

The second possibility which Boggs suggested as a site for sinking an obstruction was called the Narrows. This is a five-mile stretch of the Apalachicola River lying fifty-five miles below Chattahoochee and thirty-six miles above Apalachicola. From a generally southerly course the river bends and flows due east for nearly a mile before it curves back to flow due west for another mile. From there it takes a sharp southeast-north northwest turn and flows south in a straight course for a mile before entering two more miles of short, abrupt bends. The disadvantage of this area was that it offered no position to command an obstruction with a land battery.[36]

Having completed his survey, Boggs began his efforts to gather men and supplies to carry out his plans. He requested one hundred hands, rations, and tents from the Confederate Quartermaster at Columbus. Getting no encouragement from

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[35]W. R. Boggs, *Military Reminiscences of General William R. Boggs, C. S. A.* (Durham, 1913), 30.

[36]*Army O. R.*, I, XIV, 506-07.

the Quartermaster, he then appealed to the mayors of Columbus and Eufaula. From them he learned that workmen could not be obtained until the crops had been secured. Even an advertisement offering a dollar per diem wage, lodging, rations, and medical care did not bring response to Boggs' efforts.

Boggs received no more aid from General Pemberton than he had received from the Army and the government in the area. The General informed him that no guns could be spared for fortifications and that there would be no tents for a working force until winter. Pemberton promised Boggs $15,000 as soon as it counld be made available, but he added that the department at the time was without funds. After making a report of his difficulties to the Department of Engineers, Boggs resigned on June 4.[37] The placing of obstructions was thus delayed until very late in 1862.

Citizens of Early County, Georgia, who were much concerned about the delays in constructing the *Chattahoochee* and obstructing the river, wrote to the Secretary of War in October asking that something be done about river defense. They pointed out the strategic importance of Columbus' position near the West Point Railroad and the investment represented by the one hundred thousand bales of cotton stored in the river valley.[38]

On November 5, 1862, the Columbus, Georgia, city council adopted the following resolution:

> Whereas it is of the greatest importance that our city should be made secure from the approach of the abolishionist [*sic*] armies, and whereas there are many good and well grounded reasons to fear their approach by way of the Chattahoochee River.
>
> Resolved that this council do hereby appropriate the sum of $3,000 of aid in placing of obstructions in the said river, under the direction of the officers having work in charge. . . .[39]

[37] *Ibid.*, 542-48.
[38] *Ibid.*, XIV, 666.
[39] Minutes of Columbus City Council, November 3, 1862. *Army O. R.*, I, LII, 373-74.

The mayor, Dr. J. F. Bozeman, wrote a letter to Randolph expressing the council's concern for the safety of the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee area. The mayor and his council evidently were not receptive to Randolph's efforts to assure them that the Chattahoochee would be defended, for on November 22 they announced their intention to sink an obstruction in the Apalachicola River at Alum Bluff twenty-two miles below Chattahoochee, Florida. Governor Milton of Florida raised immediate objections to this non-military interference at first and later withdrew his objection.[40]

Some degree of coherence was introduced to the efforts to defend the Apalachicola River when, in November, the governors of Georgia, Alabama, and Florida appealed to Jefferson Davis. Soon afterward the Middle Florida Military District was created. Extending from the Suwannee River to the Choctawhatchee River, the principal area within the district was the Apalachicola River. The renewed efforts to defend the Apalachicola began under the command of a new officer, General Howell Cobb, and under the direction of a new engineer, Captain Theodore Moreno. The two men met in Columbus where they formulated plans for the defense of the district. The first concern was to obstruct the Apalachicola and the second was to defend the land approach to Tallahassee from St. Mark's, Florida.[41]

Moreno received suggestions for obstructing the river from Major A. L. Rivers, Assistant Chief Engineer of the Confederate Engineers. Rivers recommended as Boggs had, that a complex of cribs be used. This design involved two parallel rows of square cribs placed twelve feet apart and built up to the low water mark of the river. The two rows were thirty feet apart and the cribs were placed in a staggered arrangement. To these Rivers suggested that there be attached rafts which would provide obstruction at any stage of the river.[42]

The plan which Moreno devised proved much simpler than that which Rivers had proposed, and, more important, it could

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[40]*Ibid.*, 686-87.

[41]Horace Montgomery, *Howell Cobb's Confederate Career* (Number 10 in *Confederate Centennial Studies*, ed. W. Stanley Hoole, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1959), 78-80.

[42]*Army* O. R., I, XIV, 682.

be carried out quickly. It consisted of three heavy chains placed across the river at the Narrows to catch logs, trees, and trash which floated downstream. Placement of the chains was completed before the end of December and by early March enough debris had collected to form an obstruction.[43]

In directing river defenses, Moreno incorporated earlier efforts which the Columbus commissioners had made. He chose Rock Bluff, a point thirteen miles south of Chattahoochee, as the site of the second obstruction. Columbus Commissioners had earlier selected Alum Bluff, which was twenty-two miles south of Chattahoochee.[44]

Fortifying the obstructions which had been sunk at the Narrows and Rock Bluff posed the next problem in river defense. As Boggs had pointed out in his first survey of the river, the advantages of the Narrows as a good place to sink an obstruction and as a point inaccessible to an enemy was counterbalanced by the fact that constructing batteries there would be difficult. Nevertheless, Cobb planned to place his best and heaviest guns there. He ordered three thirty-two pounders placed in one battery and planned to place another battery of that strength there also. At Rock Bluff eighteen and twenty-four pounders from Alum Bluff were mounted on wooden frames which had been built in Columbus. Concerning these defense measures, Cobb wrote to Commander of the District of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, General G. T. Beauregard:

> These obstructions constitute the main defense of the river. If the enemy breaks there, there is little hope of successful resistance above.[45]

Until the completion of the batteries, measures were taken to defend the force at work upon them. From the less than one thousand troops in the District of Middle Florida, Cobb ordered more than a hundred sharpshooters to lookout posts below the obstructions. The Army tried to use Negroes to

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[43]Montgomery, *op. cit.*, 82.

[44]*Army O. R.*, I, XIV, 731.

[45]*Ibid.*, 729.

strengthen the lookout system, but the slaves used this duty as a means of escape.[46]

Finally, the gunboat *Chattahoochee* was called into service to aid in protecting the defense works. The machinery on the vessel had not been completed so it was suggested that it be towed down the river. In this way the battery on the gunboat could be put to use while work continued on installation of the machinery.[47]

The *Chattahoochee* was towed first from Saffold, Georgia, to Chattahoochee, Florida, where it remained for a while before going down the Apalachicola to the site of the obstructions. Once the ship arrived, the residents of the town were very curious to see it, and according to Gift the seamen were equally curious to see the ladies of the town who came down to the river.

After the ship had been at Chattahoochee for a week, some of the enlisted men invited a group of ladies aboard to observe gunnery practice. The crew fired all the cannon to the great delight of their visitors. One shot ricocheted and went "skipping and bounding over the water up the river, throwing beautiful jets at every point of contact with the water."[48] General Howell Cobb's Chief of Artillery had particularly wanted to see the exercise but, finding an acquaintance among the ladies, he paid little attention to the firing.

While their ship lay at Chattahoochee, Jones and Gift thought that they might fill the time by inviting some ladies of Columbus down to see the gunboat. Columbus women had tended members of the crew in the hospital and the officers wanted to show their gratitude. The ladies were to come down on a steamboat, stopping at Saffold to take on the Misses Shackelford. They were to arrive at one in the afternoon, passing by the *Chattahoochee* which would be flying the Confederate flag at each mast head and the Spanish, French, and English flags at the end of the gaff. As the ladies landed,

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[46]Montgomery, *op. cit.*, 83. The contrabands who escaped supplied Union blockading officers at Apalachicola with information relating to Confederate operations.
[47]*Army O. R.*, I, XIV, 728, 731.
[48]Castlen, *op. cit.*, 102.

the officers planned to have men cheering in the rigging. Once their visitors were on board, a complete artillery exercise would begin. There is no record to indicate whether this expedition was ever carried out; surely if it had been, the Columbus papers would have noted it.[49]

Despite the diversions at Chattahoochee, Catesby Jones must have chafed at the delays in getting the gunboat ready for action and at the relatively passive duty of guarding the obstructions, for General Cobb wrote to him:

> I am glad to know that I shall have your cooperation in defense of the river, whilst I regret on your account that you cannot have a larger and more congenial field of operation.[50]

Thus, the *Chattahoochee's* first assignment was that of implementing the measures which would block its passage to the Gulf and its hope of raising the blockade at Apalachicola.

That blockading force was neither ignorant of, nor indifferent to, the Confederate activity upstream. They had kept close contact with sources of information, so close, in fact, that the delivery of newspapers to Apalachicola was halted and Cobb suspended the contract for mail delivery at the distribution point on Ricko's Bluff. This restriction of information did not prevent a Union report to Gideon Welles early in December which gave full information concerning the activity centered in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee area.

This report of Lieutenant A. F. Crossman of the *Somerset* described Apalachicola as "an important strategic point, inasmuch as its possession insures a base for any operations upon the interior of Georgia and Alabama." He pointed out that the city was without protection or provisions and that the only Confederate force was a horse troop of fifty which patrolled the river as far as the outskirts of Apalachicola. Under those circumstances he thought it possible for a Union regiment to move into the city and erect earthworks which would defend the city from an attack from up the Apalachicola River.

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[49] *Ibid.*, 104.
[50] *Navy O. R.*, I, XVII, 865.

The situation which Crossman described was what he considered temporary. He feared that troops would be sent down from Columbus to re-occupy the city, for Milton of Florida in his annual message had called the withdrawal up the river a "fatal error." Crossman continued:

> A company of 40 resolute men can come down at night, take possession of the town, mount guns upon works already thrown up, and any morning may show us the rebel colors floating over batteries in position to drive the blockade from the bar and permit the egress of the rebel gunboat *Chattahoochee*.[51]

On the strength of this threat Crossman suggested that a group of four or five light-draft gunboats be sent to engage and sink the *Chattahoochee*. He further suggested that light-draft river-steamers be captured to serve as transports for troops. The force could then proceed up the Chattahoochee to make a surprise attack upon Columbus.

In support of his plan, Crossman continued his report five days later on December 22 with information concerning communications and provisions. He reported that there was no telegraph connecting Apalachicola and Columbus and that communication was by river or by a sandy and circuitous road. Provisions could be supplied from the estimated thousand head of cattle roaming wild upon St. Vincent's Island. Crossman said that they would provide meat for a force of ten thousand men for thirty days. He included in his report a consideration recurrent in all reports from the blockaders off Apalachicola — the fact that his vessel was unable to enter the shallow waters adjacent to Apalachicola.

This inability to enter the Apalachicola River must have become even more frustrating to the Union officers in the blockading force, for Crossman had learned a great deal of the importance of what lay upstream. In his report he mentioned the Navy Yard on the Chattahoochee River where gunboats were under construction. He listed the industries in Columbus, Georgia: three cotton factories, one rolling mill, foundries to cast cannon, a machine shop, and two gun shops.

[51] *Navy O. R.*, I, XVII, 347-48.

He had learned that railroads diverged from Columbus to Montgomery, Alabama, and the important Georgia cities of Savannah, Augusta, and Milledgeville. He spoke also of tens of thousands of bales of cotton stored in Columbus and of quartermaster stores, calling the city "one of the grand depots and sources of strength of the Confederacy."[52]

Had Crossman known of the paucity of fortifications and troops on the Apalachicola and that the obstruction had confined the *Chattahoochee* to the river, he would have realized that the blockading force at Apalachicola was more than sufficient to meet any attack which the Confederates could muster. On the first of October the blockade had been held by two side-wheel steamers and a bark, amounting to a total force of 301 men and nineteen guns. By November 15 the force had been increased to three side-wheelers — the *Somerset, Fort Henry,* and *Fort Royal* — and two barks, the *Amanda* and *J. S. Chambers*. This concentrated 479 men and thirty-three guns at Apalachicola. Although the *Fort Henry* was transferred at the end of November, the remaining vessels were stationed there to maintain a strength of 359 men and twenty-six guns, a force which was increased in February.[53]

On December 16, 1862 the *Somerset* replenished its stores from a supply ship. An inventory of what the ship took on gives some insight into life and conditions aboard:

> 1 barrel pork, 1 barrel beef, 2 barrels flour, 840 pounds preserved meat, 175 pounds dried apples, 467 pounds sugar, 53 pounds tea, 400 pounds coffee, 96 pounds butter, 110 pounds D. M. vegetables, 72 gallons beans, 44 gallons molasses, 42 gallons vinegar, 351 pounds tobacco, 300 pounds soap, 10 pounds black thread, 5 pounds white, 96 handkerchiefs, 2000 needles, 28 thimbles, 36 jack knives, 36 scissors, 12 razors, 96 cases shaving soap, 24 fine combs, 48 coarse, 24 pots (tin), 48 tin pans, 50 boxes blacking, 96 bottles pepper.[54]

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[52]*Ibid.*

[53]This list was compiled from bi-monthly reports of the disposition of vessels in the East Gulf Blockading Squadron and from descriptive lists of United States blockading vessels, both of which appear in the *Navy O. R.*, I, XVII.

[54]Log of the U. S. S. *Somerset*, December 16, 1862.

The *Somerset* received stores again on February 10, 1863.

The *Somerset's* log for late 1862 and early 1863 shows how the blockaders had settled into life off Apalachicola. Ships' surgeons supplied medical attention to residents of Apalachicola, either visiting the town or having patients brought out to the ships. Both white families (often with their furniture) and contrabands came aboard the blockading vessels for transfer to other ships bound for Key West and other ports. The ships did not neglect their military function, for they had gunnery practice both aboard ship and on Sand Island. The log of the *Somerset* also records the incident of a sailor smuggling on board ship "a quantity of champaigne cider in a barrel, the bottles being concealed by him by filling the top of the barrel with oysters."[55] For the most part, however, the record of events in the log are unrelieved by such incidents.

The year, 1862, brought success in some degree both to Union and Confederate efforts in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee area. The Union was able to gain a partial hold upon the city of Apalachicola and improve communications through contact with Union sympathizers, contrabands, and deserters. By the end of the year the blockade vessels, though not light-draft, were present in force along the coast. The Confederates, despite the withdrawal from Apalachicola, had sunk obstructions in the Apalachicola and the gunboat *Chattahoochee* had been useful even though it was not entirely completed.

The accomplishments of each force in 1862 were spurred by each one's fear of the other's strength. Not knowing that the blockaders off Apalachicola were too heavy to ascend the river and that no light-draft gunboats were available because of the Mississippi operations, the Confederates worked desperately to obstruct and fortify the Apalachicola. Not knowing the Confederate inadequacies in organization, manpower, and supplies and not knowing that the obstruction had blockaded the *Chattahoochee*, the Union greatly increased its blockading strength and feared the re-occupation of Apalachicola. Thus 1862 was a year during which the Union and Confederacy overestimated each other.

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[55]Log of the U. S. S. *Somerset*, 1862-1863, *passim*.

IV. 1863: EXTENSION OF UNION RAIDS AND CONFEDERATE FAILURE TO COUNTERATTACK

The first two years of the war in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee area had been a conflict without direct engagements. The Union captured a number of vessels and some prisoners, but no resistance was made to those captures. The Union blockaders heard heavy guns firing in Apalachicola as they stood outside the Bay; but the exchange of control of the town was accomplished with the firing of one shot, a shell from a Union howitzer fired into the Bay to display the blockaders' strength to the citizens of Apalachicola. The beginning of 1863 brought a possibility of direct action as each side laid plans to attack the other.

On New Year's Day 1863, Lieutenant A. F. Crossman of the USS *Somerset* again addressed himself to the Flag officer of the East Gulf Blockading Squadron and the Secretary of the Navy concerning an expedition up the Apalachicola River. He enclosed a tracing of railroad communications in Georgia, Alabama, Florida, west North Carolina, east Tennessee, and South Carolina to illustrate the commercial importance of the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee River System. He asked them to study the tracing in order to see "the immense advantage of an expedition sent immediately, consisting of six or seven iron-plated river gunboats and 10,000 troops."[1]

Crossman explained that his insistence was prompted partly by reports of Confederate strength to the north and partly by the situation which he had observed in Apalachicola. According to his information, the *Chattahoochee* and the *Kate L. Bruce*, which had been fitted out with steam engines at Columbus, were ready to come down the river and two other boats were near completion. He was equally disturbed by the situation in Apalachicola, which feared the arrival of Confederate conscript officers to impress all men between the ages of sixteen and sixty. He reported that the people of the town were almost starving, and he did not have adequate provisions to issue rations. Had he been able to issue rations, he would have feared their confiscation for shipment up the Apalachicola.

[1]*Navy O. R.*, I, XVII, 357-58.

Of the people of the town he wrote, "It seems hard to witness and not alleviate their sufferings."

Not only was Crossman persistent and thorough in his reports, he also was very much in earnest. He wrote to his commanding officer:

> . . . though I may be considered presumptuous in offering my opinion to those of long experience, yet I am prompted by the feeling that it is the duty of all officers to do their utmost in all legitimate ways to further the crushing of this rebellion.[2]

Rear Admiral Theodorus Bailey was evidently convinced of his sincerity for Crossman's reports were forwarded to Gideon Welles in early February. On the ninth, Welles sent a brief note to Edwin M. Stanton asking if military forces could be assigned to a proposed expedition up the Apalachicola. The next day Stanton returned a brief reply offering troops in support of the Navy if further investigation of the Apalachicola proved attack feasible.[3]

Acting on the Secretary's request for a further investigation of the Apalachicola River situation, Bailey conducted a survey and made his report to Welles on March 7. He took the fact that the river's mouth was bounded by a bar which drew only six feet at high water to mean that the boats in preparation upstream could not be formidable. He added to his assumption that the vessels were intended for river defense the information that obstructions had been sunk in the river. This diminished the importance of the Confederate threat in his opinion.

Bailey then pointed out the inadequacy of his own force for making an expedition up the Apalachicola. The *Port Royal* had attempted to cross the bar into the river; and even though it had the lightest draft in service at Apalachicola, it had lain aground a week on the bar. Bailey thought that an expedition would be impossible without the light draft gunboats in the Mississippi command. Contrary to Crossman's opinion of the expedition, Bailey wrote:

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[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*, 364.

> To attempt it with small boats would be quixotic, as the river is sinuous, with frequent abrupt bends, and the current rapid, in so much that the enemy would get information of our attempted ascent long before we could reach them.[4]

His only action, therefore, was to increase the strength of the blockade. This placed four steamers off Apalachicola, one third of the steamers in his command, and one bark which provided the blockade with 447 men and thirty-five guns.

The officers of the blockade continued to collect and report information concerning Apalachicola and river defense. Lieutenant Commander George U. Morris of the USS *Port Royal* made a report to Bailey on April 24 concerning a move into Apalachicola and intelligence gained from prisoners. Having learned that there was cotton in Apalachicola awaiting shipment, he had let a small armed force into the town where he captured twelve bales of cotton along with a large supply of cannister, chain, and bar shot for thirty-two-pounders. From three prisoners, all members of the *Chattahoochee* crew, he gained full information about the dimensions and armament of the gunboat along with news of the ironclad *Muscogee*.[5]

A week after his raid in Apalachicola, Morris was visited by a refugee, William Martin, a former mechanic at the Columbus Naval Iron Works. Martin reported that there were no troops at Columbus; and he gave additional information about the *Chattahoochee* and *Muscogee*, saying that even the *Chattahoochee's* crew predicted that it would never get down the river. Martin had also seen the obstructions in the Apalachicola and had seen a picket guard at Fort Gadsden.[6]

By the first of May, therefore, the pressure of Confederate threats was greatly reduced for the blockaders at Apalachicola. The Confederates to the north, while not so powerful as the Union had thought, were nonetheless interested in launching operations of some type upon Apalachicola. Lieutenant George W. Gift was, perhaps, most interested in the prospect, un-

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[4]*Ibid.*, 381-82.
[5]*Ibid.*, 421.
[6]*Ibid.*, 432.

derstandably so, since he had been among those who had constructed and served on the *Arkansas*.[7]

In his eagerness for action, Gift proposed a rather daring plan to capture Apalachicola. With a crew of sixty from the *Chattahoochee*, in his command since the transfer of Catesby Jones, he planned to go down the Apalachicola on the Steamer *Swan* as far as Jackson River six miles north of Apalachicola. He and his force would proceed from there to the outskirts of Apalachicola, sending three citizens of Apalachicola from the crew into town as if on leave. Lieutenant Morris of the *Port Royal* would be notified of their presence and come ashore in search of prisoners.

It was Morris' custom to come into the city with a force of about sixty men. After placing his howitzer in position at the landing with a guard of ten or fifteen men, Morris then set about searching the town. It was Gift's plan to attack and capture the guard left at the howitzer and take the remainder of the force as they returned to the landing. Dressed in the Union uniforms, the Confederates could then approach and capture the *Port Royal* unchallenged and engage the remainder of the blockaders in turn.[8] Gift was unable to carry out this plan, for two weeks later the *Chattahoochee* became involved in the most important operation of its career.

During the last week of May, Lieutenant Morris learned that the schooner *Fashion* was anchored up the Apalachicola. Cotton was being placed on board the vessel in preparation for running the blockade at Indian Pass. In order to prevent her escape, Morris ordered a boat expedition to ascend the river and capture the schooner by surprise. On the night of May 23 forty-one men under the command of Acting Master Edgar Van Slyck left the *Port Royal* in three boats.

The Union seamen rowed up the Apalachicola at night during a heavy rainfall, passing Fort Gadsden at two in the morning. At ten the following day they had rowed an esti-

[7]Scharf, *op. cit.*, 617. James K. Polk's first act as President had been the appointment of Gift to Annapolis. After serving in the Pacific fleet following his graduation, Gift established a newspaper in Napa, California. At the beginning of the war he had come south with Albert S. Johnston. Following the war Gift returned to Napa.

[8]*Ibid.*, 866.

mated forty-five miles (probably less since the first obstruction was thirty-five miles from Apalachicola) without seeing any sign of the *Fashion*. Returning down the river, they saw a barge near Scott Creek, twenty-three miles above Apalachicola, which indicated that a larger vessel was nearby. The boats entered the creek where one discharge of the howitzer brought the surrender of the *Fashion* without opposition. Although a Confederate camp was reported to have been within six miles of the scene of the capture, the Union seamen were able to tow their prize into the river and from there to Apalachicola and the blockading station. Even though Morris adjudged the schooner unseaworthy, the raid netted several prisoners and fifty bales of sea island cotton.[9]

News of the capture of the *Fashion* caused great concern in Chattahoochee, Florida, where the *Chattahoochee* was stationed. Although Gift was temporarily absent from the vessel, having already received orders to join the *Baltic* at Mobile, Lieutenant J. J. Gurthrie decided to attempt crossing the obstructions to give aid to the *Fashion*. The *Chattahoochee* therefore left Chattahoochee on May 26 and continued as far downstream as Blountstown Bar, twenty-eight miles below Chattahoochee.

Finding that the bar carried only seven and one half feet, not enough to allow the gunboat's passage, Gurthrie ordered an overnight wait in hopes that the river would rise. The river did not rise, however, and at ten the following morning the order was given to raise steam in preparation for returning to Chattahoochee.

When the order was given to raise steam there was an argument in the engine room as to how much water the boilers contained. The chief engineer, Mr. Henry Fagan, heard the discussion from his bunk and hurried to the engine room. Curiosity had also drawn the pilot, William Bilbro, who started the donkey engine just as Engineer Fagan descended the ladder into the engine room. Water poured into the boilers and they immediately exploded.

Pandemonium followed on the *Chattahoochee*. Fourteen men were killed in the blast or died immediately afterward. Those who had been scalded ran about the deck frantic with

[9]*Ibid.*, 447-48.

pain, "leaving the impression of their bleeding feet and sometimes the entire flesh, the nails and all, behind them."[10] Since the boilers of the ship had been within three feet of the magazine, one of the gunners warned of an explosion, sending the crew into further panic and sending many of them over the sides into the river. Three drowned as a result before Midshipman Craig could restrain those trying to abandon the ship. Dr. Marcellus Ford went about the deck trying to give aid to the injured and Lieutenant Gurthrie came from his cabin and began to administer baptism to the dying.[11]

Before long the *Chattahoochee* began to sink and Gurthrie gave orders to abandon ship. Four men were dispatched to flood the magazine and one was ordered to save the personal effects of the officers and men. By the time the injured had been put ashore it had begun to rain and they "lay in the mud on the bank writhing and groaning."[12] Later they were taken to a nearby cotton gin where they remained until the steamer *William H. Young* carried them away the next afternoon.

The *Young* first reached the *Chattahoochee* about midnight of the twenty-seventh, about twelve hours after the accident. The steamer transported Gurthrie and six others seventeen miles upstream to Ochesee. On the following morning it returned to take aboard the dead and injured who were transported to Chattahoochee that afternoon. After another trip down the river, this time to salvage two of the guns, the *Young* set out for Columbus, a trip requiring three days.[13]

In Columbus the injured were received at the Soldier's Home.[14] The street in front of the hospital was crowded with

[10]*Ibid.*, 870.
[11]*Columbus Daily Sun*, June 7, 1863.
[12]*Ibid.*
[13]*Navy O. R.*, I, XVII, 474.
[14]"Teeny" Benning (Gen. Benning's daughter) Manuscript, 1928. The Soldier's Home was the first hospital in Columbus, a two story wooden building donated by George Woodruff, a grist mill owner. It stood on the southwest corner of Broad and Ninth Streets. Though the hospital was staffed by a matron and Negro servants, local women served as nurses and supplied the patients with delicacies from their own tables. Some Columbus families had to content themselves with corn bread while the precious store of flour went into bread for the soldiers. One Columbus merchant complained that each time he looked for a clean shirt he found that his wife had used it to shroud a casualty. Soldiers who died at the home were buried at the southwest corner of Linwood Cemetery, where the grave of Chattahoochee fireman Cornelius Duffey may still be seen.

vehicles which had brought Columbus women to nurse the victims of the accident. Lieutenant McLaughlin wrote to Catesby Jones that they found a grim task. Despite the unpleasant aspects of their work, the ladies remained faithful in their efforts.

McLaughlin also related to Jones the details of the death of Midshipman Charles K. Mallory, one of the eleven members of the *Virginia's* crew who had volunteered for service with Jones aboard the *Chattahoochee.* At the battle of Hampton Roads he had been the first of the *Virginia's* crew to board the *Congress* after she had struck her colors. According to McLaughlin's touching account, Mallory was also brave in service on the *Chattahoochee:*

> The doctor said that Mallory could not live. You would have thought differently had you seen him. I could not make up my mind that he would die. When they first commenced to remove his clothes he was talking cheerfully, but the nervous system could not stand the shock. He commenced sinking and was a corpse before they had gotten through.[15]

Cornelius Duffey, a fireman, died on the day following Mallory's death.

With the loss of the *Chattahoochee,* concern for defense of the river came immediately into the forefront. The Dahlgren and one of the thirty-two-pounders which the *Young* had salvaged were placed as a battery on the river near where the *Chattahoochee* lay. In a report of the accident the *Daily Sun* added the reassuring comment that with this battery the river was "safer than ever."[16]

On June 9 the *Sun* printed an article from the Quincy, Florida, *Dispatch* which reported an attempt by the Union to pass the obstructions at the Narrows. However, General Cobb had dispatched a force to strengthen the battery guarding the obstruction.

In the meantime the *Chattahoochee* remained partially sunk in the river. It had been hauled to the right bank where it

[15]*Ibid.*, 871.
[16]*Columbus Daily Sun,* June 7, 1863.

lay with the bow free and the stern resting in twelve feet of water. D. S. Johnston of the Saffold Navy Yard was placed in charge of raising the wreck. The most valuable parts of the vessel's outfit were taken to Saffold, Eufaula, and "the arsenal" (probably Chattahoochee), and the wreck was left under the protection of a group of Negroes. Johnston returned later to find that the vessel had been stripped of everything that could be sold or traded.[17]

The members of the *Chattahoochee's* crew who had escaped injury were stationed in Columbus for a short time under the command of Lieutenant McLaughlin. They were then transferred to Savannah where they were assigned to the gunboat *Savannah.* The lieutenant was liberal in praising the men for their fine appearance, close organization, and good discipline.[18]

Others of the crew were not so praiseworthy. J. C. Cook, ship's cook, went south from Blountstown Bar to Apalachicola where he boarded the *Port Royal.* Cook gave Lieutenant Morris a complete report of the accident and voluntarily took the oath of allegiance to the United States. Quartermaster Elias Lee also boarded the *Port Royal,* took the oath of allegiance, and became pilot of the ship. From the reports they had received from Cook and Lee, the Union blockading officers assumed that the *Chattahoochee* was a total loss.[19]

The Union blockading force lost no time in pressing the advantage it had gained by the loss of the gunboat *Chattahoochee.* Even the loss of the *Amanda* and the damage to the *Somerset* in a storm on May 29 did not detain them. On the twelfth of June they launched an expedition against the salt works on Alligator Bay just east of Dog Island.

With the *Somerset* standing in range of the operations with its battery, a force of sixty-five armed men and others armed with sledge hammers went ashore. They destroyed four establishments in the vicinity which contained a total of sixty-five vats, nine buildings related to the salt works and thirty

[17]*Navy* O. *R.*, I, XVII, 871.
[18]*Ibid.*, 870.
[19]*Ibid.*, 474. Dickison, *op. cit.*, 55, states that the *Chattahoochee* was quickly raised and repaired. Further references from the *Navy* O. *R.* would discount his statement.

huts which had housed the workers. They scattered two hundred bushels of salt along the shore before returning to their ships.[20]

Thus, the Union destroyed the most important installation on the coast near Apalachicola at that time. In addition to the works at Alligator Bay, there was another on St. Andrew's Bay which was three quarters of a mile square.[21] A group of men from Early County, Georgia, near Saffold, had at the beginning of the war, established a salt works at St. Mark's. They transported the salt by ox cart to the Saffold Navy yard where the naval officers distributed it.[22] The Alligator Bay works, however, was described as being "the most extensive on the coast at that time."[23]

After the loss of the *Amanda* in a storm and the removal of the *Chattahoochee's* threat, the blockade off Apalachicola was cut to three vessels, the steamers *Port Royal* and *Somerset* and the bark *J. S. Chambers,* which carried a total of 275 men and twenty-three guns. This force continued to send expeditions inland. In July, raids netted twelve bales and fourteen bags of cotton.[24] Early in October another salt works was discovered two and one half miles inland opposite St. George's Sound. A small Union force destroyed it without either opposition or casualties.[25] On the thirtieth another raid into Apalachicola netted ten bales of cotton.[26] For the remainder of the year three vessels held their positions without action to report.

Whether they were aware of the reduction in the blockading force or not, Confederates up the Apalachicola feared that their defenses were inadequate. The military and the government, as they had been a year earlier, were in opposition as to how the defense could be strengthened. Governor Milton of Florida favored keeping up contact with Apalachicola and re-occupying it if possible. Major General J. F.

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[20]*Ibid.*, 470-71.
[21]Ella Lonn, *Salt as a Factor in the Confederacy* (New York, 1933), 71.
[22]Undated clipping in the possession of D. H. McDowell, Blakely, Georgia.
[23]Lonn, *op. cit.*, 177.
[24]*Ibid.*, 503.
[25]*Ibid.*, 562.
[26]*Ibid.*, 582.

Gilmer of the Confederate Engineers favored concentration upon strengthening the obstructions in the Apalachicola.

Governor Milton re-opened the discussion of the reoccupation of Apalachicola in a letter to Beauregard on October 15. In it he outlined the gloomiest threats of Union occupation of the city and the serious results of their accomplishing such a mission. He also dwelt upon the plight of the five hundred citizens who, though loyal to the Confederacy, were left in the city starving for bread.[27]

Milton received no encouragement from the General, for he had opposed Cobb's suggestion that the city be reoccupied a year earlier. Confederate military strength simply was not sufficient. While Beauregard could have released a sufficient force to occupy the city, he could not have stationed a strong force in the city to hold it.[28]

The opinion of General Gilmer, which Beauregard received, opposed the re-occupation of Apalachicola. He said that placing a garrison at Apalachicola "would be to tempt the enemy to concentrate his strength and make an attack, which must, in all probability, result in disaster to us." He further pointed out the advantages of the Confederate position at the Narrows, a point which was virtually impossible to attack or surround at high water, the only time when the enemy could transport troops upstream. While, as Gilmer stated, a garrison at Apalachicola would be open to attack from St. Joseph's and St. Mark's, the obstructions could be manned effectively by a much smaller force, thus freeing additional men for active combat.[29]

General Gilmer, with the support of Col. D. B. Harris on the Apalachicola and Brig. General Thomas Jordan at Albany, Georgia, advocated the obstruction of Mocassin Creek and Chipola Cutoff near the Narrows. These two streams provided treacherous and circuitous, but nevertheless accessible, passage around the obstructions at the Narrows for communication with Apalachicola. These officers thought that the existence of these passages greatly weakened the effect of

[27]*Army O. R.*, I, XXVIII, part II, 450-51.
[28]Montgomery, *op. cit.*, 85.
[29]*Army O. R.*, I, XXVIII, part II, 450-51.

the obstructions on the main stream and strongly advised that they be closed. Moreno had thought of placing guns at Fort Gadsden to slow the progress of any attacking force, but the largest gun available would have been of insufficient range and force for effectiveness.[30]

Governor Milton remained unconvinced by the argument of the Engineers. He wrote to Beauregard saying that he continued to discourage obstruction of Mocassin Creek and to urge occupation of Apalachicola. He countered Gilmer's evidence with the opinion that the General had been overly influenced by railroading interests, which sought to diminish river traffic, thus diverting river commerce to rails and increasing the importance of Pensacola and Mobile.[31] Evidently the Governor remained firm, for McLaughlin wrote to Catesby Jones on December 26, "Old Milton says he will blow them all to the devil and open the river."[32]

The loss of the gunboat *Chattahoochee*, the decision to obstruct the Apalachicola completely, and the conflict over whether or not to re-occupy Apalachicola struck a serious blow to Confederate hopes in 1863 but by no means exhausted them. The major hope of river defense, the iron-clad *Muscogee*, was and had been an important promise of an effective striking force.

From the organization of the Confederacy, much importance and much money had been accorded the iron-clad vessel. In Mallory's opinion it would serve to equate the ship and the fort in firepower and resistance to bombardment. Confederate ironclads in opposition to United States wooden ships would overcome inequality of numbers with invulnerability. He therefore urged the construction of iron-clads "without regard to first cost."[33]

Steps had been taken before the end of the first year of the war to establish facilities in Columbus which could construct iron-clads. Major James H. Warner had been sent to Columbus in the fall of 1861 to lease private machine works

[30]*Ibid.*, 423-24.
[31]*Army O. R.*, I, LIII, part II, 299.
[32]*Navy O. R.*, I, XVII, 872.
[33]*Ibid.*, II, II, 117.

and organize them for the use of the Confederate Navy. His work was delayed until the spring of 1862 while he served in Pensacola designing the machinery for the *Mississippi*.[34]

Warner, who had been Chief Engineer at Gosport, Virginia, prior to the war, had been the only Chief Engineer in the Confederate Navy at the time of its organization.[35] He was therefore very valuable in organizing and directing what Gorgas termed "the nucleus of our ordnance establishment."[36] The nucleus with which he began in Columbus was comprised of Brown's Foundry, Golden's Machine Shops, Gray's Gun Manufactory, Fell's Cannon Foundry, Love's Variety Shop, Churchill's Rolling Mill, and Sanford's Boiler Manufactory.[37]

The three major tasks of the Columbus Naval Iron Works were casting cannon, manufacturing boilers and engines for steamers, and constructing gunboats. Frequent mention is made in the *Navy Official Records* of the cannon and machinery which Warner's command produced. However, the *Muscogee* received rather slight and infrequent mention.

The earliest mention of the *Muscogee* in the *Navy Official Records* is contained in a report from Lieutenant Morris of the USS *Port Royal*. Three crew members of the *Chattahoochee* whom he had captured in Apalachicola in April of 1863 informed him that the vessel was under construction. They described it sketchily as a diamond-shaped iron-clad drawing four or five feet and intended for service in Apalachicola Bay.[37] Morris gained fuller information several days later from William Martin, a former mechanic at the Columbus Naval Iron Works who had emigrated from the Confederacy to escape conscription. According to Martin the vessel was 120 feet long and ten to twelve feet deep. The frame of one-foot-square green pine timber had been completed and work begun in planking and coiling the outside as Martin left Columbus on April 22. The boilers, taken from an old river steamer, *Times*, had already been put into place. Martin predicted that

[34]Standard, *op. cit.*, 43.
[35]Etta Blanchard Worsley, *Columbus on the Chattahoochee* (Columbus, 1951), 283.
[36]Frank Vandiver, *Ploughshares Into Swords: Josiah Gorgas and Confederate Ordnance* (Austin, Texas, 1952), 61.
[37]*Navy O. R.*, I, XVII, 421.

due to the scarcity of iron the *Muscogee* would not be ready for launching before November.[38]

It is entirely possible that plans and work on the *Muscogee* had begun as much as a year earlier since Major Warner began his work in Columbus in the spring of 1862. It seems unlikely also that Catesby Jones and George Gift, who had participated in the construction and careers of the most illustrious of Confederate iron-clads, the *Virginia* and the *Arkansas*, were sent to Columbus solely to command the wooden gunboat *Chattahoochee.* Delays had been caused by Major Warner's inability to secure iron and Mr. Charles Blair's inadequate force of skilled carpenters to construct the hull of the *Muscogee.*[39]

Lieutenant McLaughlin wrote to Catesby Jones that caulking and laying the spar decks was begun on June 18 and at that point the engines were ready to be put into place.[40] By December 26 all of the internal fixtures were complete with the exception of guns and a magazine. "I am only waiting for the river," wrote McLaughlin, "which, from present appearances, will not keep me waiting long."[41]

Governor Milton of Florida had given McLaughlin his assurance that Apalachicola would be re-occupied as soon as the *Muscogee* was launched. Though Moreno planned to build a wagon road over the river, using the obstruction as a foundation, Milton had interested Jefferson Davis in the advantages of sending the *Muscogee* to Apalachicola.

While Confederate dissension over major problems of defense went on among high administrative officials, the blockading officers off Apalachicola were not without their own conflicts. Their plans for a large scale offensive on the river system had been rejected because there were no light-draft vessels available. The accident on board the *Chattahoochee* had removed the threat of an immediate offensive against the blockade. Although there were raids upon salt works, the duty of blockading Apalachicola had become somewhat routine.

[38]*Ibid.*, 432.
[39]John H. Martin, *Columbus, Georgia, from its Selection as a "Trading Town" in 1827, to its Partial Destruction by Wilson's Raid in 1865* (Columbus, 1874), 169.
[40]*Navy* O. R., I, XVII, 871.
[41]*Ibid.*, 872.

Thus, dispatches to the Commander of the Squadron included complaints that the mail boat failed to visit Apalachicola at regular intervals.[42] One officer complained that the supply ship crew had been most abrupt and discourteous to members of his own crew who wanted to purchase delicacies from the supply ship.[43] The commanders seined the bay for fish to vary the diet and allowed their crews exercise liberty on the beach at St. George's, but by 1863 Apalachicola had become more and more a hardship station.

Nevertheless, the third year of the war in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee area had been the most active year. It had begun with great offensive plans on each side and sufficient strength amassed to promise action. However, neither plan was brought to fruition because the Union lacked light-draft steamers and the Confederates lost one gunboat and were unable to complete the other. The Union blockade, even without light vessels, had been effective off shore and along the coast. Confederate efforts, on the other hand, had brought tragedy, dissension, and failure.

The end of 1861 had seen the Confederate foothold weakening at Apalachicola and the end of 1862 had seen their efforts centered on the obstruction and the *Chattahoochee*. The conclusion of the third year of the war found them faced with efforts in Columbus to repair the *Chattahoochee* and launch the *Muscogee*. Columbus as the head of navigation in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee River System was the last stronghold in Confederate naval installations. Confederate naval efforts could be driven no farther north than Columbus.

[42]National Archives Microcopy Number 89, Roll 200, 5.
[43]*Ibid.*, 13-15.

V. 1864: CONFEDERATE OFFENSIVE THREATS AND UNION COUNTER THREATS

The iron-clad *Muscogee* represented the greatest test of Confederate skill and ingenuity in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee area. Failure to launch the vessel on New Year's Day was a bitter disappointment to those who hoped to re-occupy Apalachicola, and it meant the failure of the supreme effort of war industry in the area. In a more immediate sense it was to mean spending an additional year, an expenditure of man hours and supplies, in efforts to re-model and launch the iron-clad.

The gunboat *Chattahoochee* also remained out of service because of the accident on board. Its crew, lacking an armed vessel, was sent to Apalachicola in small boats with a plan to break the blockade. This daring expedition also met with failure; for, betrayed by Apalachicola Unionists, caught in a storm, and pursued by Union landing parties, the Confederates were barely able to escape up the Apalachicola to the obstructions.

Despite two significant failures, the Confederates remained a threat to the blockade at Apalachicola. The officers stationed there maintained a careful study of Confederate strength. In addition, they prepared careful surveys of the navigability of the river system northward and delivered full reports on the strength of Columbus. By the end of the year the threat of the reconstructed *Muscogee* was sufficient to bring Union orders for increasing the blockade.

Lieutenant McLaughlin had been correct on December 26 when he predicted that the Chattahoochee River would soon rise sufficiently to float the *Muscogee* from the blocks. He must have read with great anticipation the *Daily Sun's* report that the river had risen ten feet on New Year's Eve, causing the citizens of Columbus to fear for the dams and suspend operation of the cotton mills.[1] The *Enquirer* also reported that the river was high and included its best wishes for the *Muscogee,* adding, "may she have better luck than her consort,

[1]Columbus *Daily Sun,* January 1, 1864.

the *Chattahoochee,* which is now lying at our wharf a perfect wreck of her former self."[2]

Contrary to predictions and expectations, the high water did not lift the *Muscogee* into the river. The steamer *Marianna,* whose return trip to Chattahoochee was delayed by the high water, was engaged to tow the vessel into the river. Operating in sixteen feet of water, the *Marianna* was unable to move the iron-clad.[3]

The Confederates at the Naval Iron Works were left nothing to do except begin altering the *Muscogee* in an effort to make it operable. The hull was to be extended in the hope that that would provide needed buoyancy. The casemate was also reduced to remove excess weight.[4]

The renewed efforts on the *Muscogee* were not viewed with a great degree of public support and patriotism, as an *Enquirer* editorial reflected in March:

> If one will but take a stroll upon the banks of the Chattahoochee, just below our wharf, they will find that there has been enough money wasted upon the old "slantin' dicu'ar" looking craft, propped upon legs, to feed a brigade of soldiers for a considerable period, if not longer. What could ever have been expected of such a looking craft we cannot imagine — unless a second flood is expected — and we are quite sure that nothing but a general inundation can ever lift the thing from its present position. To say the least, it is decidedly a great failure; and in our opinion, the best thing that can be done with the whole concern is to take it to pieces and commence over again.[5]

The editorial continued by estimating that the entire project had cost the government several hundred thousand dollars. The *Daily Enquirer* conjectured that the *Muscogoo* had been more expensive than the *Alabama.*

The Confederate Navy evidently expected the alterations

[2]Columbus *Daily Enquirer,* January 1, 1864.
[3]Columbus *Daily Sun,* January 2, 1864.
[4]*Navy O. R.,* I, XVII, 774.
[5]Columbus *Daily Enquirer,* March 16, 1864.

of the *Muscogee* to be dispatched quickly. Guns were ordered from the Selma ordnance works for the vessel in February. Lieutenant George W. Gift was returned to Columbus with orders to command the iron-clad. On March 15, however, he was transferred to command of the *Chattahoochee.*

Gift's new command was also unfit for service. Major Warner had examined the vessel in December and expressed surprise that it had been allowed to sink. Although the deck above the boilers had been raised six inches by the explosion in May, 1863, Warner observed that a pine plug driven into the feed pipe would have kept the gunboat afloat. Ironically, the lack of this simple bit of information kept the *Chattahoochee* partially sunk in the river for more than six months before it could be towed to Columbus for repairs.

In May, almost exactly a year since the accident at Blountstown Bar, Gift and his officers decided to conduct an expedition against the Union blockaders *Adela* and *Somerset.* They planned to board and capture the *Adela,* the smaller of the two vessels at East Pass, and with it to capture the *Somerset.*

Being a crew without a ship, the officers and men of the *Chattahoochee* were transported down the Chattahoochee River by the steamer *Marianna.* On May 3 the *Marianna* deposited the eleven officers and forty-seven crew members at Saffold. There they manned seven boats, two launches under the command of Gift and Midshipman Blanc which pulled fourteen oars each; two yawls, two cutters, and a metallic boat, each pulling four oars and commanded by Midshipmen Vaughn, Sparks, Hague, Frazee and Surgeon Ford.

The boats were fitted out with muffled oars, paddles, grapnels, and incendiary materials. Gift issued pistols to the officers and the men were armed with rifles, bayonets, and cutlasses. They carried on the expedition fifteen days' provisions for one hundred men.

The party reached Chattahoochee, Florida, at seven o'clock on the morning of the fourth. Sixteen volunteers from the First Georgia Regiment, Fifth Georgia Cavalry, and the First and Second Florida Battalions joined them there. At 10:40

[6]*Navy O. R.*, I, XVII, 873.

the expedition left Chattahoochee and made its way down the Apalachicola to Ricko's Bluff fifty miles below Chattahoochee and fifty-seven miles above Apalachicola. There they received thirteen additional volunteers. After dark on the same day the seven boats reach Fort Cobb, a battery at the obstructions. Captain Blount who was in command there assured Gift of reinforcements from his command.[7]

Upon reaching Apalachicola, the Confederates crossed St. George's Sound at night and landed at East Point near where the *Adela* and *Somerset* lay. There they took cover to await a dark night and a rough sea to cover their move against the *Adela*.

Gift and his men remained on St. George's for a week. The rough sea which they had hoped for did not come and Midshipman J. T. Scharf later wrote, "The sea was smooth and the dipping of the oars in the phosphorescent water emitted a luminous light which shone brightly some distance beyond."[8] Due to the delay caused by the weather, the party ran low on supplies and were forced to obtain more from Apalachicola. The scouts who delivered the supplies informed Gift that Unionists in Apalachicola had informed the blockaders of his plan.

This combination of circumstances led Gift to decide to abandon his plan for attack, withdraw from East Point, and attempt an escape up the Apalachicola. Late on May 12 as a storm was rising on the sound, the boats left East Point. Gift's boat and another manned by ten soldiers took a course across the sound for Apalachicola while the other boats hugged the shore toward Cat Point.

The next several hours proved that Gift's course across the sound had been an unfortunate choice for the wind rose rapidly in the north. The boat containing the soldiers was swamped and the survivors swam to grasp the outside of Gift's boat. After several hours, Gift became ill. He then trans-

[7]*Ibid.*, 700. Midshipman Blanc's diary which contained this record of the expedition was captured by the Union and forwarded to the U. S. Navy Department. Microcopy 89, Roll 202 refers to the diary, but it was not included in the film.

[8]Scharf, *op. cit.*, 618. Scharf, who became known as a journalist and author of a history of the Confederate Navy, was able to furnish a colorful and detailed account of this storm in his *History of the Confederate States Navy*.

ferred command of the boat to Scharf who later recorded the experience:

> At this time the boat was half filled with water and seventeen men on the inside, ten men from the swamped boat hanging on the outside and the sea washing over her. The boat was but two miles from the shore and all expected every moment would be the last. Finding that it would be impossible to reach the town in the face of the storm, Midshipman Scharf informed Lieutenant Gift that the only hope was to turn around and go to sea before the wind. The commander instructed Midshipman Scharf to do what he thought best, and immediately Midshipman Scharf informed the men of his determination. There was great fear of swamping in the trough of the sea in churning, but having confidence in his judgement, the crew were ready to obey his commands.[9]

In preparation for turning about, the guns, ammunition, lanterns, baggage, water casks, and other articles were jettisoned. Six of the nearly exhausted men were taken from the outside of the boat.

Finally, as a large wave struck under the quarter, nearly lifting the boat out of the water, it was turned and headed toward St. George's. Soon afterward the remaining four who had been clinging to the outside of the boat were taken into the already over-loaded craft. The "storm driven Confederates" approached St. George's fearfully in the sound of the breakers pounding the beach. Abandoning the boat as they neared the island, they were able to swim to safety. For two days they were cast away on St. George's without provisions, foraging the island for palmetto cabbage, alligators, and oysters.[10]

In the meantime, the other Confederate boats had reached Apalachicola where they were confronted with further dangers. With the hope of capturing the raiding party which he knew to be in the vicinity, Lieutenant Samuel Budd of the *Somerset* had sent a detachment of New York Volunteers from the

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[9]*Ibid.*, 619.
[10]*Ibid.*, 620.

schooner *J. S. Chambers* ashore below Apalachicola on the night of the storm. With two launches from his own ship he set out for Apalachicola. The plan was to strike the town at dawn, the land force from the rear and Budd's force from the bay.

Arriving at Apalachicola at daybreak on the thirteenth, Budd's force found seventy or eighty of the *Chattahoochee* party on the upper wharves preparing to man their boats. Seeing the Union launches, they abandoned their boats and retreated through the town followed by two shells from the *Somerset's* howitzer.

The retreating Confederates took the river road northward, passing within a short distance of the Union landing party. The lieutenant in command of the Volunteers, thinking that they were a part of his own command, allowed them to pass unchallenged. This mistake allowed the Confederates time to scatter into the swamp before Budd's force could land their boats and set out in pursuit. After going two miles up the river through dense undergrowth in search of the Confederates, Budd and his men returned to take possession of the deserted boats and supplies.

Later in the same day, Budd learned that Gift was in St. George's Sound with two boats and about thirty men. He dispatched a boat to give chase, but Gift's boat was able to elude it at nightfall. The smaller boat, however, with a crew of three was overtaken and captured.[11]

Before leaving Apalachicola, the Confederates had arranged to send three citizens of the town in search of Gift and the rest of the crew. The relief party found them on the fourteenth and carried them from St. George's to Apalachicola. When they learned that the other members of the crew had been driven from the town, they lost no time in pushing off from Apalachicola. After traveling some distance up the river, Gift ordered the boat sunk in a bayou. From there he and his party traveled overland to join the remainder of the expedition force above the obstructions on the Apalachicola.[12]

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[11]*Navy O. R.*, I, XVII, 698.
[12]Scharf, *op. cit.*, 621.

The Confederate expedition only served to bring orders for strengthening the blockade they had tried to break. The *Fort Henry,* a side wheeler with 120 men and seven guns, was ordered immediately to replace the *J. S. Chambers,* a six-gun sailing vessel with a crew of sixty-two. With the *Adela* and *Somerset* this provided three hundred men and twenty guns off Apalachicola in May, 1864.

Lieutenant Gift returned to Columbus where he immediately began inquiries about repair work on the *Chattahoochee.* A letter from the Navy Department on June 2 informed him that Chief Constructor Daniel Porter had been instructed to inspect the *Chattahoochee* as soon as his duties in Wilmington permitted. A week later he again received a message from the Navy saying that Lieutenant McLaughlin would superintend repairs on the gunboat, a job which would require about four months according to the Department estimation.[13]

Within two months, however, Captain Theodore Green, successor to Bailey in the East Gulf Blockading Squadron, reported to Welles that the Confederates planned an attack on the blockade. Accounts from a deserter and refugees reported that the *Muscogee* was completed and was to be sent to Apalachicola with the support of cotton-clad barges and scows. Acting on these reports, Green ordered the *Sagamore* and the *Fort Henry* to join the *Somerset* at Apalachicola, replacing the *Adela* and *Clyde.*[14]

Union interest in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee area showed a marked increase in the fall of 1864. During the month of October three detailed reports on the bay and river system were filed by the Corps of Engineers at the request of the Navy Department. The first report dealt with bars, shoals, and passages in Apalachicola Bay and information about river soundings as far north as Columbus. It also contained names of pilots familiar with the waters.[15]

A second report, ten days later on October 17, contained more specific information on the Apalachicola, Chattahoochee,

[13]*Navy O. R.*, I, XVII, 874.
[14]*Ibid.*, 742.
[15]*Ibid.*, I, XXI, 674.

and Flint Rivers. After giving soundings on the Chattahoochee for the U. S. Arsenal at Chattahoochee, Florida, Barber's Shoals, Fort Gaines, and Georgetown, the report concluded that vessels drawing seven feet six inches to eight feet could be carried to Columbus from September until June. It reported that on the Flint nine feet could be carried to Bainbridge and seven feet eight inches to Albany. Significant in the report is mention of the condition of the obstructions thirty miles north of Apalachicola. According to prisoners of the First Florida Cavalry, a wooden obstruction had been washed away and a schooner was anchored there to be sunk across the channel.[16] This schooner was almost certainly the *Kate L. Bruce,* listed in Confederate reports as having been sunk in the Apalachicola as an obstruction.[17] The final report of the series cleared up a minor question regarding soundings on the bar at Apalachicola. Through talking with refugees, the Union officers off Apalachicola were able to gain very valuable information about the state of affairs from Apalachicola to Columbus. Lieutenant Commander Simpson of the USS *Insomnia,* who had served at Apalachicola since October 1, collected and delivered to the East Gulf Blockading Squadron Headquarters a very comprehensive report dated November 11.

According to the information that Simpson had gathered, there was a picket guard at Fort Gadsden composed of five men and a corporal. Although this point twenty miles from Apalachicola had been a part of Confederate plans for river defense, there were no guns there at the time of Simpson's report. Twenty-six miles farther up the river at Iola was a landing visited regularly by the *William H. Young.* This river steamer served as headquarters for the captain commanding a detachment of 140 men at Chattahoochee. This force, which had a battery of four guns, was encamped without tents about one half mile from the town. Nearby the former U. S. Arsenal had been converted into quarters for the families of the men stationed at Chattahoochee.

Refugees traveling southward along the Chattahoochee in the early fall had seen no troops between Columbus and Chattahoochee. They reported that in Columbus every able

[16]*Ibid.*
[17]*Ibid.*, II, II, 257.

bodied man was being enlisted for the defense of the city, whose population had been swelled to 11,000 or 12,000 by the influx of refugees from the north. Mostly women and children, the refugees were sheltered in huts and abandoned rolling stock along the railroad from Fort Valley, Georgia, to Columbus and Eufaula and supplied by the State with enough corn meal to prevent starvation. For the defense of the city's residents and its industry, works were being erected in the city and all industrial employees were organized into armed companies.

Columbus industries, as they were listed by the refugees, were certainly vital and extensive enough to warrant considerable defense measures. Hayman's factories which manufactured swords, pistols, and bayonets employed 175 white men. At the Army Ordnance Department 150 white men and 150 white women worked in two factories, producing saddles, bridles, harness, and equipment for artillery in one division and casting shot and shell in the other. In the division for shot and shell there was also a laboratory. At the Quartermaster station 225 white men operated a tannery and shoemaking shop and twenty-five men were employed as tailors for the Army. In addition to these installations there were three cotton mills employing a total of about 365 white men and a paper mill which employed twenty-five white men. The staff of each of these establishments was increased by a force of Negroes.

The most important installation in Columbus was the Columbus Naval Iron Works which operated on a twenty-four-hour day and employed four hundred white men. It was thought that no guns were being cast at Columbus (orders in 1864 for the *Muscogee* and in 1865 for the *Chattahoochee* were directed to Catesby Jones in Selma), but the Iron Works was known to be active in supplying boilers and engines for vessels under construction at Charleston and Savannah.[18]

Reports on vessels in progress at those stations on November 1, 1864, reflect the extent of the Iron Works' operations. Major Warner's command had supplied engines for an iron-clad under construction at Wilmington, for two steamers

[18]*Ibid.*, I, XVII, 772-775. Microcopy 89, Roll 203, 73-82.

and an iron-clad at Savannah, for two iron clads on the Tombigbee River in Alabama.[19]

Because other needs of the Confederate Navy received priority at the Columbus Naval Iron Works, the gunboat *Chattahoochee* still awaited repairs in Columbus, nearly a year and a half since the accident on board. The best that Warner's report of November 1 could promise was that the vessel "will soon be put in commission again." The engines had been overhauled and repaired along with damage to the deck. Two boilers had been sent from the wreck of the *Raleigh* at Wilmington. In addition to the work on the *Chattahoochee*, there was a torpedo boat nearing completion.

The major consideration of the construction program in Columbus was the *Muscogee*. As it had a year earlier, it lay on the stocks to be launched as soon as the river rose. The machinery supplied by Warner was in readiness, and the six seven-inch rifles from Selma were in place. Due to the low supply of iron (a deficiency of 280 tons according to the Chief Constructor's report for November) the vessel had been armored only at the knuckle where the casemate was joined to the deck.[20]

Progress at the Columbus Naval Iron Works did not escape the interest of the Union blockade off Apalachicola. Lieutenant I. B. Baxter of the *Fort Henry* reported that he had learned from prisoners that the *Muscogee*, reportedly more formidable than the *Tennessee*, was ready for launching. They had said also that the torpedo boat was nearly complete and that the *Chattahoochee* was fully repaired and ready for action. He concluded that the Confederates were "making every preparation to make a raid on the blockade at this place."[21]

Five days after Baxter made his report, Acting Rear-Admiral C. K. Stribling, who had replaced Green in the Squadron, informed Welles that his force at Apalachicola was insufficient either for conducting inland raids or for maintain-

[19] *Ibid.*, II, II, Reports on Vessels in Progress: Wilmington, 751; Savannah, 752; Chief Constructor Porter's report from Richmond, 600.

[20] *Ibid.*, 752. Standard, *op. cit.*, 45, interprets Porter's figures on the deficiency of iron as the *Muscogee's* tonnage.

[21] *Navy O. R.*, I, VII, 785.

ing the blockade. It was necessary for the blockading force to make repeated attacks upon salt works along the coast, an operation which usually resulted in a short-term disruption of salt making rather than a permanent destruction of Confederate salt works. Sending the men in small boats on expeditions which lasted oftentimes several days resulted in hard labor and over-exposure. Therefore, Stribling requisitioned vessels of lighter draft which could be maneuvered nearer the mainland.[22]

Stribling was especially concerned about the blockade's capability in the event of a Confederate attack. The boilers on the *Somerset,* which had seen such extended service off Apalachicola, had worn out, and the ship could serve only as a floating battery. The remainder of the force there was made up of the *Fort Henry,* the schooner *Beauregard,* and the steam tug *Sunflower.* The total force was 209 men and 18 guns, but Stribling feared that it could not withstand an attack from the vessels which Baxter had described.

Actually the Union fears were unfounded during the weeks immediately following. The *Chattahoochee* was never returned to action; the torpedo boat was completed just as the war closed; although it was launched, the *Muscogee* was never fully plated. Neither force could foresee that the war was drawing to a close. Therefore, the launching of the *Muscogee* on December 22 was a great boon to Confederate morale. The *Daily Enquirer* reported on the morning of the twenty-third:

> This splendid ram was successfully launched yesterday at about 11 o'clock and now sits as calmly upon the Chattahoochee as a duck upon a pond. Mr. Chas. Blair, her builder, superintended her launching. Too much praise cannot be bestowed upon the manner in which the whole affair was conducted. An eye witness says that she glided into the water so smoothly and easily that there was not motion sufficient to have shaken the water in a tumbler . . . . Those capable of judging, who have examined this craft, inform us that she is one of the most compact, and securely built craft yet afloat upon our waters. Success to her, say we, and may she be manned by able and capable

[22]National Archives Microcopy 89, Roll 203, 113.

> officers who will never get scared and blow her up or stick her in the mud the first time a booger man says booh at her.[23]

The *Muscogee's* launching was thus finally accomplished and the *Enquirer's* praises finally forthcoming.

The year 1864 had been in several ways much like the preceding year. It had begun with concern for launching the *Muscogee,* a failure which 1863 had built toward. It was marked by action at Apalachicola in May followed by an increase in the strength of the blockade. The fall had brought increased Union attention to intelligence relating to inland affairs on the one hand and Confederate concern for repairing the *Chattahoochee* and launching the *Muscogee* on the other. The year ended with the launching of the *Muscogee* as the crowning achievement, a factor which caused the Union to fear for and increase its blockade.

Aside from the changes that the passage of a year most certainly made in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee area, there was one subtle factor. Despite the Union report of a threat to the blockade at Apalachicola in early December, their earlier intelligence had been different in tone. Their dispatches of October and November were more objective, seemingly less motivated by contemplation of an attack upon the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee River System or by fear of an attack upon the blockade from the vessels in preparation there. Their reports were almost stated in terms of an inventory of territory and installations which the Union ultimately would control.

[23]*Columbus Daily Enquirer,* December 23, 1864.

VI. 1865: CONCLUSION OF OPERATIONS

The closing months of the war brought two brief and bloodless Union expeditions along the Apalachicola River. The previous fall had seen a hard-fought engagement at Marianna, Florida, west of the Apalachicola and the following March brought a raid from St. Mark's into Tallahassee east of the Apalachicola. By comparison the Apalachicola itself was very quiet, and as late as March 14 the commander of the East Gulf Blockading Squadron appealed to Welles for more vessels to strengthen the blockade against the threat of Confederate gunboats from the Chattahoochee and Apalachicola.

The last months of the war found the Confederates at Columbus still at work on vessels there. The *Muscogee* was receiving final attention to the battery and armor and a torpedo boat was nearly complete. The *Chattahoochee* remained in a partial state of disrepair. In late March and early April the threat upon these vessels at Columbus had become a land force from the west, not a naval force from the south as it had been for the previous four years. In the face of General James H. Wilson's raid the *Chattahoochee* was burned, the torpedo boat set adrift, and the *Muscogee* left to fall into Union hands.

On January 16 the U. S. bark *Midnight* dispatched a boat expedition from its blockading station at St. Andrew's west of Apalachicola. The object of the expedition was to capture the steamer *W. H. Young* which transported supplies from Columbus to the Confederate garrison at Ricko's Bluff. The Union planned to travel overland to the Chipola River, enter the Apalachicola above the obstructions, and ambush the steamer as it tied up at Ricko's Bluff.

On the afternoon of the sixteenth a party of thirty men under the command of Acting Master Charles Cadieu left the *Midnight* in the second cutter and a launch armed with a howitzer. Proceeding along a creek as far as possible from St. Andrew's, the group concealed the launch in a lagoon near Wetapo Creek. Proceeding inland, the party held a prearranged meeting with three Confederate deserters at noon the next day. One of the deserters led Cadieu and several others to his home where they received a yoke of oxen and a wagon for transporting the cutter overland to the Chipola.

Cadieu's party remained in the vicinity of Ricko's Bluff for a week, exploring the nearby tributaries to the Apalachicola and keeping a close watch upon the movements of the Confederate garrison there. They received reports that the steamer was expected daily, but an incident on the evening of the twenty-fourth caused them to abandon the plan of waiting to capture the *W. H. Young*.

At seven o'clock on the night of the twenty-fourth a small Negro girl stumbled upon the picket guard which Cadieu had posted near his camp. Ignoring their orders to halt, she escaped — carrying, Cadieu was certain, news of the Union's presence to the garrison on Ricko's Bluff. A consultation among the group led to the decision to move immediately upon the bluff while they could still do so with an element of surprise.

The Union party was able to surprise the five Confederates at a camp near the bluff without firing a shot. There they took possession of ten horses, eight carbines, two shotguns, one musket, and one rifle. Moving on the guard post at the bluff, they captured the picket guard of four. In addition, they discovered and burned a government storehouse where a large quantity of corn was stored.

In the Union soldiers' absence from their camp, a group of about thirty Negroes gathered there. They asked that they be taken to the Gulf and Cadieu agreed to let them travel with his party. They set out on the morning of the twenty-fifth, returning overland as they had come, and reached the *Midnight* on the twenty-ninth.

Instead of returning to the *Midnight* with the main body of Cadieu's force, eleven men under the command of Acting Ensign Gruff took a small boat through the Chipola Cutoff and Gum Swamp and into the Apalachicola below the obstructions. Their objective was Fort Gadsden, which they reached on the night of the twenty-sixth. Though it had been the custom of the picket guard there to man a scow in midstream, the Union party saw nothing afloat as they passed. They attempted to land and move up the river bank toward the fort, but they were cut off by a creek. They then rowed upstream past the garrison and approached it from the rear. After capturing a

sergeant and a private there, they searched along the river for three remaining men who were residents of the area and stationed at Fort Gadsden.

The net gain of the two expeditions was one lieutenant, three sergeants, twelve privates, and nineteen stands of arms. Forty-three contrabands had also returned with the Union. The expedition had had to abandon the captured horses because they could not be transported across the river. The most significant accomplishment of the expedition was the destruction of the warehouse containing an estimated 150 bushels of corn.[1]

Even though the force from the *Midnight* had seen little that could pose any threat to the blockade, it was increased during February and March. On the first of February the *Matthew Vasser*, a mortar schooner with a battery of three guns, joined the *Beauregard, Fort Henry, Somerset,* and *Sunflower* which had held the blockade for several months. On the fifteenth the *Mahaska* with ten guns and a crew of 145 joined this group at Apalachicola.

Two weeks later the *Fort Henry* and the *Mahaska* were sent east to St. Mark's to join a large group of vessels, no doubt to support the Union Army's movement to Tallahassee in March. This force of seven steamers and three schooners placed a strength of forty-nine guns and 722 men within a relatively short distance from any difficulty at Apalachicola.

Despite the heavy concentration of vessels off Apalachicola, Acting Rear-Admiral Stribling was concerned with the safety of their position. He communicated to Welles on March 14 the need for stationing light draft vessels with heavy batteries at that point. Of the five vessels stationed there in mid-March *(Fort Henry, Howquah, Mahaska, Spirea,* and *Beauregard)* only the *Fort Henry* was suited to operations there.

According to Stribling's account the need at Apalachicola was desperate. He had been informed that the *Muscogee* was launched and prepared for action and with the support of other vessels from Columbus contemplated a raid on the Apalachicola blockade.[2] His fears that the Union blockade at Apalachicola would not hold were unfounded, as the events of the next

[1]*Navy O. R.*, I, XVII, 797-800.
[2]*Ibid.*, 825.

month proved. By that time General J. H. Wilson's force had swept through Alabama, capturing Selma and Montgomery and the war was in its last days.

As General Wilson's force moved across Alabama, the first major threat to Columbus took shape. Prior to April, 1865, Columbus had feared enemy raids from time to time, but its major preoccupation had been war production and receiving refugees and wounded from centers of action. Work had been in progress for nearly two years on a line of trenches and gun emplacements which stretched for two miles along the ridge west of the Chattahoochee. The city's industrial force and Columbus men too old or too young for active service were organized into companies of militia. Conditions in the city, however, were comparatively good in the spring of 1865 and news of the fall of Selma, Alabama, on April 3 brought no immediate realization that the capture of Columbus would follow twelve days later.[3]

The influx of refugees from Montgomery on April 13 made Columbus aware of the immediacy of the Union threat. General Howell Cobb and Colonel Leon von Zinkern directed a force of about two thousand men in almost frantic efforts to complete Columbus defenses. On April 15 noncombatants were ordered to evacuate the city and all bridges except the railroad span and the Fourteenth Street bridge were made impassable.[4]

Arriving late in the afternoon of the fifteenth, Wilson's Cavalry Corps surprised a group of Negro men who were hastily strengthening the Girard fortifications. The Union withheld attack until eight in the evening when they launched the first of three assaults on the Confederate line. The capture of the Fourteenth Street bridge two hours later ended effective resistance, and Columbus was in Union hands on the morning of April 16, 1865.[5]

Having captured Columbus, Wilson's raiders spent two days destroying the installations which had supplied the Confederacy: the Navy Yard, foundries, armory, railroad stocks

[3]Standard, *op. cit.*, 59.
[4]C. Robert Watkins, *Wilson's Raid Through Alabama and Georgia* (unpublished master's thesis, Auburn University, 1959), 194, 198, 199.
[5]Standard, *loc. cit.*

and depots, the cotton factories, and the gun and harness factories. The Union captured also what remained of the Confederate Navy, the uncompleted *Muscogee*.[6]

General E. F. Winslow's report contained a painstaking description of the *Muscogee*. Even in the eyes of the army officers Wilson and Winslow, the *Muscogee*, though not fully completed, was a formidable vessel. Had the blockading officers at Apalachicola known that the iron-clad could not have been ready for action before May 1 they would have probably held their stations in a greater degree of security.

Winslow's report, which he called personal and not scientific, described the *Muscogee* as being 250 feet long and forty-five feet wide with a draft of six and one half to seven and one half feet. The hull was of live oak, two feet thick with a solid oak ram extending fifteen feet from the bow. Below the water line were two engines supplied with steam from four boilers. With a three-foot bore and a three-foot stroke, these engines powered a seven and one half foot propeller.

Three hatches led from the engines and boilers to the gunroom, a space forty feet long and twenty feet wide. The gun room was built in a pyramid shape and extended nine feet above the deck. There were ten port holes in the gun room and the six seven-inch rifles were arranged so that there were two guns fore and aft and one gun on each side. The guns fore and aft were arranged in a way that would allow them to fire broadside as well.

Two feet above the gunroom and directly adjacent to it was the pilot house. This was a heavily plated position and from that point the armor of the vessel sloped toward the knuckle in six-by-two-inch slabs. The armor curved over the knuckle and extended below the water line. The overlapping plates at the knuckle provide a thickness of four inches of armor.

The *Muscogee* was complete except for armor on the gunroom. Winslow wrote that it had been three years in preparation and was two weeks away from completion. Its career

[6]*Army O. R.*, I, XLIX, 383.

ended before it had begun as Union troops set fire to the vessel and set it adrift in the Chattahoochee.

In recording its destruction the Union also obtained a complete record of the strength of the installation which had produced the *Muscogee.* Winslow itemized the destruction of buildings and machinery in a small rolling mill, a larger rolling mill about to go into production, a large blacksmith shop, a foundry, a copper shop, a boiler shop, a pattern shop, and several offices and drawing rooms.[7]

The Union Army and Navy remained in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee area for some months after the close of the war. The *Paul Jones, Spirea,* and *Muscoota* were placed in service for a time off Apalachicola and a military post was established in the city in early June. Agents of the Army and Navy in Columbus were sent to take charge of collecting captured goods for sale or shipment.

The first Union troops which reached Apalachicola took the torpedo boat which had been sent downstream from Columbus. Stribling reported to Welles that it was complete and ready for action and that he had ordered it towed to Key West. The steamer *Yucca* was assigned the task, but the prize was lost when the *Yucca* encountered a strong westerly wind enroute to Key West.[8]

The occupation force which was sent to Apalachicola on May 31 was made up of units of the 161st New York Infantry and the 82nd U. S. Colored Infantry. Thirty mounted men were also included in this force which carried with it supplies for Wilson's command to be transported to Macon.

General Alexander Asboth, who was placed in command at Apalachicola, reported that citizens who had emigrated from the city were returning to re-occupy their homes and businesses. The Union force aided in the return to normalcy by collecting

[7]*Ibid.*, 385-86. Wilson's report of capture says "*Muscogee,* alias *Jackson*"; Winslow's report says, "*Muscogee.*" Thatcher's final report (7 fn) says *Jackson.* No Confederate reports studied cites *Jackson,* but there was a river steamboat named *Jackson.*

[8]*Navy O. R.*, I, XVII, 853. Prior to this study it had been thought that the torpedo boat had sunk in the Chattahoochee River.

and replacing buoys and light house machinery from storage in Eufaula. The port saw renewed activity as it became a clearing house for cotton, captured machinery, and other booty which was shipped from the river system to the Gulf.[9]

One of the Union soldiers stationed at Apalachicola later wrote:

> Apalachicola contained before the war a population of two thousand, but we found on our arrival only a few hundred. All the places of business except one cotton press was closed, the streets were covered with grass, the houses and sidewalks were falling to decay, all the churches were closed, and an oppressive quietness everywhere prevailed.
>
> The appearance of things at our departure was different from what it was at our arrival; then, hardly a person was to be seen, and a spirit of utter desolation brooded over the place. Now the levee was covered with bales of cotton, the wharf was astir with citizens, and handkerchiefs were waving from many of the windows and sidewalks.

Part of Asboth's detachment left Apalachicola on July 26, 1865, whereupon the Union diarist commented, "Farewell, sandy, dry, hot Apalachicola, may we never see thee more!"[10]

On November 20, 1865, Acting Rear-Admiral H. K. Thatcher of the Gulf Squadron, made a complete and final report to Gideon Welles concerning the state of affairs in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee River System. It included a report on the condition of the late Confederate Navy on the rivers.

The burned wreck of the *Chattahoochee* lay at Race Pass twelve miles south of Columbus. The gunboat had been wet down with ten barrels of kerosene and ignited by slow fuses before Wilson's raiders had arrived, and the crew had retreated by the light of the fire.[11] The *Muscogee's* wreckage had come

[9]*Ibid.*, 856-57.

[10]*Military History of the One Hundred and Sixty-First New York Volunteer Infantry*, n.d.), 48.

[11]*Montgomery Advertiser*, clipping with no date in the possession of the Alabama Department of Archives and History. Information contained in the clipping was from a relative of Andrew Olds, a *Chattahoochee* crew member who had helped with the destruction.

to rest on a shoal thirty-two miles south of Columbus. The iron-clad's guns, armor, and machinery lay partially melted in the bottom of the hull. Thatcher suggested that both vessels be sold to someone who would finish wrecking them in order to recover the iron.[12]

Thus, the operations of the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee River System ended. The last three months of the war passed much as the previous three years of the war had passed, with the Confederates working to complete vessels which could raise the blockade and the Union blockade trying to organize a light-draft force which could engage and destroy these vessels in the shallow waters at Apalachicola. The war ended before either side could carry out the task it had set for itself.

[12]*Navy O. R.*, I, XXII, 258-59. Two guns from the *Chattahoochee* were recovered from the Chattahoochee River in 1912 by Gunby Jordan and are mounted at the Confederate Naval Museum in Columbus. Through the efforts of the Georgia Historical Commission and a group of Columbus citizens, the wrecks of the *Muscogee* and *Chattahoochee* were recovered during the early 1960's and may be seen at the Museum.

VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

While the major engagements of the Civil War were fought in other areas of the Confederacy, the record of the war in the Apalachicola and Chattahoochee Rivers developed in terms of preparing for rumored attacks and making abortive plans to launch significant offensives. The Union and Confederate naval forces in that area did not fight an engagement; the only shots fired were aimed at Confederates who fled Union forces or at Unions who fled Confederates; neither side inflicted a single casualty, except upon itself as a result of accident or negligence. The conclusion of the war, in fact, found the Union off Apalachicola able for the first time to muster an effective light-draft force for operations in the waters there, and the Confederate iron-clad *Muscogee* was less than a month away from completion. In contrast to other theatres of action, the history of the navies here becomes a record of frustrated efforts and potential never fully realized.

The Union at Apalachicola accomplished its chief mission at Apalachicola by establishing an effective blockade during its first year of operations there. Maintaining the blockade became a somewhat routine matter, marked by changes in strength from time to time. Officers there continually feared that the Confederate vessels in the rivers to the north would descend upon the blockade, and the strength of the blockade fluctuated according to the Union assessment of Confederate strength along the Apalachicola and Chattahoochee Rivers.

As the concentration of Confederate strength receded up the Apalachicola River, the Union was able to pursue the minor and complementary mission of conducting raids along the coast and into the river. Landing parties in 1861 confined their operations to St. Vincent's and St. George's Island opposite the port of Apalachicola. In May, 1862, parties from the *Mercedita* and *Somerset* ascended the Apalachicola River to capture vessels anchored five miles from the town. The *Fashion* expedition in May, 1863, penetrated twenty-two miles into Confederate territory to capture the schooner and a cargo of cotton. During the remainder of the year the Union was active in its raids upon stores of cotton and salt works along the coast. Although 1864 brought only minor action, January, 1865, marked

the most far-reaching expedition up the Apalachicola — a raid on the Confederate garrison at Ricko's Bluff, fifty-seven miles north of Apalachicola.

The officers who directed the Union operations at Apalachicola felt through the war that their force was ill-suited for operations there. The first reports of the blockaders made urgent requests for lighter draft vessels and equipment for operations in shallow coastal waters. Hardly more than a month before General Wilson's force took Columbus, the blockading squadron reported their fear of attack from the rivers and pointed out the inadequacies of their vessels. The war ended as the Union Navy finally supplied suitable vessels.

Apalachicola, however, was not as important to the Union as Mobile, Pensacola, and New Orleans. The officers off Apalachicola were simply left to make the blockade as effective as possible with the vessels assigned to them. Oftentimes in the early months of the war, when activities at the Apalachicola wharves continued out of their reach, they lost advantages which lighter vessels could have gained. Their vessels grounded; the prizes they were able to capture they were unable to free from the harbor. They were never able to launch an offensive against the strategic objectives they knew to exist along the Apalachicola and Chattahoochee Rivers. In consideration of the Union disadvantages at Apalachicola, it may be said that they acquitted themselves well in operations there.

Confederate efforts along the Apalachicola and Chattahoochee Rivers were far more diversified than Union operations there. Their defense measures involved obstructing the river, maintaining land batteries, and constructing vessels. Their defenses were responsible for the security of valuable ship building and arms manufacturing installations, lines of communication, and vital agricultural areas. Providing these defenses required the combined efforts of civilian contractors and employees.

After almost a year of trying to fortify and defend the Apalachicola area, the Confederates were forced, through lack of organizations and materials, to withdraw into Apalachicola from the fortifications on St. Vincent's and St. George's Islands. This retreat began a steady recession of Confederates from the port of Apalachicola northward.

In 1862 the drive to finish the gunboat *Chattahoochee* was carried on simultaneously with efforts to obstruct the Apalachicola River at the Narrows and Rock Bluff. Both projects were completed by the end of 1862, but the obstructions and the defense which they offered cut off the offensive promise of the *Chattahoochee,* a vessel capable of operations against the blockade at Apalachicola.

When the *Chattahoochee* was blown up by an inexperienced crew at Blountstown in May, 1863, as it attempted to go down river to relieve the *Fashion,* the progress of naval operations was greatly slowed. As the *Chattahoochee* lay partially submerged in the river and later awaiting repairs at Columbus, Georgia, efforts were concentrated upon completing the ironclad *Muscogee.*

The failure to launch the *Muscogee* on January 1, 1864, brought the concentration of Confederate efforts to Columbus, the northernmost point of the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee area. Throughout the year work continued to repair the *Chattahoochee,* remodel the *Muscogee,* and prepare small torpedo boat for action.

The Apalachicola-Chattahoochee area was a point far more vital to the Confederacy than the blockade of Apalachicola was to the Union. This has already been reflected in a discussion of the variety of efforts made there and can be further shown through a consideration of the personnel assigned there. Chief Engineer Warner of the Columbus Naval Iron Works was a man of ample training and experience. He organized the industrial potential of Columbus and directed an installation which proved invaluable to the Confederacy. Catesby ap R. Jones, whose service in the area was rather brief, had already proved his ability as executive officer of the *Virginia* and was to render important service as commander of the ordnance works at Selma, Alabama. George W. Gift, who had helped to construct and command the *Arkansas,* served two tours of duty in Columbus during the war.

This capable executive force was hampered, however, by the lack of personnel and supplies to carry out its plans. Skilled carpenters and mechanics were difficult to find at Saffold and

at Columbus. This created delays in the construction of vessels, and the *Muscogee* had to be redesigned. In the absence of Gift, an inexperienced crew exploded the boilers of the *Chattahoochee* and allowed the vessel to sink, not taking the simple measures which could have prevented its loss.

Defense efforts along the Apalachicola and Chattahoochee were delayed by conflicts between the Army and the government. Governor Milton was in constant disagreement with the Corps of Engineers about the obstructions in the Apalachicola. Civilians implored the Army to provide defense only to refuse donations of labor and material to complete the work. At one time in 1862, the Army, the state government of Florida, the Navy, and a group of civilians were working independently to defend the river.

Despite the instances in which Confederate operations and policy proved inadequate in the Apalachicola and Chattahoochee Rivers, they achieved some significance. The greatest accomplishment was the work of the Columbus Naval Iron Works, as the records of its contribution to Wilmington, Norfolk, and Savannah show. The construction of an iron-clad warship, the *Muscogee,* was also a significant feat, in spite of the fact that the vessel did not see action. Moreover, the fact that an essential agricultural area could mobilize itself and develop its industrial and commercial potential into a significant installation for war production is a tribute to the ingenuity and perseverance of the people of the Apalachicola and Chattahoochee area.

Wilson's raid on Columbus and the end of the war concluded more than four years of a warfare of threats and preparations to meet those threats. Ironically, neither force — the Union with its heavy draft vessels nor the Confederacy with its uncompleted vessels — could enforce the threats which it posed. Operations in the Apalachicola and Chattahoochee Rivers were virtually a cold war within a heated and destructive conflict.

BOOK REVIEWS

James H. O'Donnell, III. *Southern Indians in the American Revolution.* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1973. Bibliography and index. 171 pp. $8.50.)

On the southern colonial frontier the war between American and Briton involved a third party, the American Indian. The combatants of the Revolutionary War either hoped or feared that Cherokee and Creek, Choctaw and Chickasaw, would take up the hatchet and, by the strength of their numbers (estimated at ten thousand warriors) and with their forest cunning and aboriginal courage, sway the balance of victory for either the garrisoned redcoat or the homebound militiaman. O'Donnell sketches the efforts of both to influence the tribes by gifts of powder and trade goods, food and rum, and, on the American side, by devastating military strikes into the Cherokee heartland.

Although diplomacy occupied much of the time and effort of the American George Galphin and the British Indian superintendents John Stuart, Alexander Cameron, and Thomas Brown, the course of events was determined by other factors. Indian poverty and dependence upon the whiteman's culture, especially for the tools of war, had already reduced the tribes to clientage before the Revolution began. They were incapable of military action on their own and fatally vulnerable to attack, as Williamson, Rutherford and Christian demonstrated in 1776, Pickens and Sevier in 1780-82. The Patriots (to use O'Donnell's term) enjoyed a further advantage in their clarity of purpose — in this case, land-grabbing. The Americans fought for profit against an enemy who either could not or would not fight for his home. The losses of the Indians can be measured, like those of massacred frontiersmen, by the dozens (including women and children); the gains of the southern states constituted millions of acres well worth the price. Finally, any hope of British support and leadership (and in the villages there were men who might have provided it) was crushed by the deadweight of petrified administration personified by the Florida Governors Tonyn and Chester and the military incompetence of General John Campbell. The southern tribes were caught in the middle, and it is not surprising that the shrewdest of their leaders, McGillivray of the Creeks, turned to Spain as a

last resort, seeking to shore up the old collapsing policy of playing one white nation against another.

O'Connell's book makes all this clear enough and provides a convenient, well-balanced survey of the subject. Although he ignores Hispano-Indian relations after 1781, his research in the Anglo-American sources have been extensive and sufficient to have enabled him to write at greater length, with much desirable and enlightening detail, on all aspects of the story. It is most regrettable that he did not, for the brevity of his text forbids any delineation of a host of colorful characters, both Indian and white. It also makes impossible a full description of the difficulties that faced the British Indian agents and the achievements of those American backwoods leaders whose daring exploits virtually carved out new states to the west of Virginia and the Carolinas. If such matters be looked upon as having minor local import, such was the nature of southern Indian affairs during the Revolution. It also characterized the fall of a British and the emergence of an American continental empire.

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William Warren Rogers and Robert David Ward, *August Reckoning: Jack Turner and Racism in Post-Civil War Alabama.* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1973. Pp. xii, 195. $7.50.)

An alternative subtitle for this careful and enlightening book might have been, "The Biography of a Political Lynching." Jack Turner was a Choctaw County freedman who acquired his own farm and achieved local prominance in the Republican party during the decade after 1872. Under his leadership Choctaw County blacks continued to vote the Republican ticket in larger numbers than was customary or entirely safe for them in Bourbon Alabama. They failed to turn their population edge into an electoral majority, however, until the gubernatorial election of August 12, 1882, when a fusion ticket of Republicans, Greenbackers, and Independent Laborites carried the county by less than a hundred votes.

Three days later a twelve-year-old white boy discovered a packet of letters and other papers lying in the road in front of his house. On examination they purported to reveal a conspiracy by Turner and several other leading blacks to massacre the white citizens of Choctaw County, irrespective of age or sex, a month hence. Quickly the authorities rounded up all but one of the suspects and confined them in the jail at Butler, the county seat. Two of the prisoners were taken out successively and tortured before the desired confession was obtained. The rest steadfastly maintained their innocence. On the morning of August 19 about a thousand men assembled from all over the county; after two hours of debate it was voted to hang Jack Turner as the ringleader of the conspiracy. He was taken out forthwith, and died still protesting his innocence. The remaining prisoners were eventually released on bail, and after many postponements the case against them was dropped.

Professors Rogers and Ward devote scarcely more than half of their book to Jack Turner's life and death. The remainder is an illuminating account of the public reaction to the lynching around the state, the region, and the nation, based primarily on the newspaper press. As had been true during the long succession of Reconstruction outrages, opinion divided sharply, and primarily along racial and political lines. Only a few Democratic spokesmen agreed with blacks and Republicans (and with Rogers and Ward) that Turner was the victim of a political murder, based on a fictitious conspiracy concocted to get him and his colleagues out of the way. Democrats in fact employed the episode to justify their own strong-arm tactics elsewhere — the old bloody shirt turned inside out. The supposed fact of the Jack Turner conspiracy in Choctaw County led other communities around the state, with an eye to the coming congressional elections in November, to accuse their Republican parties of similar intentions. It is impossible to measure the success of the tactics: Democrats swept the November elections, but in Choctaw and neighboring counties blacks voted in relatively large numbers and the Republicans polled a substantial minority vote. Of course no solid evidence of a contemplated Negro uprising was ever found.

The authors — professors at Florida State University and Georgia Southern College, respectively — have presented this

case study of post-Reconstruction race relations about as fully and effectively as one could hope for. They have used court records from the county to the federal levels, manuscript census returns, newspapers in great number, and a variety of other source materials, published and unpublished. If the biographical data on Jack Turner unavoidably remains sketchy, this hardly affects the main thrust of the story. For anyone who has made similar investigations of that era, the account will ring true. Despite an abundance of typographical errors, the book is well and clearly written. It serves as valuable additional evidence of where Southern race relations once were, and how far they have come.

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Glenn Tucker. *High Tide at Gettysburg.* (Dayton, Ohio: Press of Morningside Bookshop, 1973. Pp. 395, bibliography, index. $9.00.)

Eight hundred and ninety-two major and more than five thousand minor battles or engagements were fought during the War Between the States. The war was over half over when Lee and Meade collided at Gettysburg on July 1, 1863, in a battle which took place because a Confederate heard that there were shoes in the town for his barefooted soldiers.

Millions of words have been written and spoken both to dramatize and justify events that took place there during the three-day struggle. In a revised version of his highly readable, well researched, and explicitly detailed book, Glenn Tucker has explained how the myth of invincibility of Lee's Army of Northern Virginia was broken. Although Lee's losses at Gettysburg were almost irreplaceable, of greater importance to the outcome of the war was the shattering of the myth surrounding Lee and his men. The Northern Army of the Potomac learned that it was not always pre-ordained to lose.

Although psychological warfare was an unknown technique in our Civil War, Lee and Jackson were very adept at

it. Jackson's valley campaign of May, 1862, not only defeated three Union armies but also the mind of President Lincoln, prompting him to make the strategic decision to reinforce the Union forces in the valley instead of McClellan in front of Richmond. This was what Lee wanted him to do. The defeat of McClellan in the Peninsula campaign and Lee's great victories at Fredericksburg, December, 1863, and Chancellorsville, May, 1863, had convinced the Union Army of the Potomac prior to Gettysburg that it was fighting an almost unbeatable combination of general and soldiers.

In 1958, Field Marshall Montgomery, Viscount Alemien, better known as "Monty," spent a few days at Gettysburg with then President Eisenhower. While there he commented to the effect that Lee and Meade had fought like mediocre generals. North and South of the Mason-Dixon line, the howls of anger rose.

Montgomery spoke at the Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Virginia, three days later. After his address, his aide asked one of the Instructors there, "How can we keep the Field Marshal from being scalped by the United Daughters of the Confederacy? He has to speak at the Air University in Montgomery next week."

"Tell him to say that if Jackson had been there, the Confederates would have destroyed Meade by noon on July 2d," the Instructor replied.

Monty made a statement, in his own fashion, to this effect. It was quoted in the press prior to his arrival in Montgomery. Result: No scalping. Instead he got the key to the city.

Tucker makes it abundantly clear in his book that the greatest reason Lee lost at Gettysburg was simple. Jackson was dead. All the points that add up to this conclusion are made.

For example, Lee fought and won his battles by what can be called the "thumb and finger" technique. One force, "thumb," holds the enemy. The other, "finger," encircles him and both forces destroy him. At Chancellorsville, Lee was his own thumb and Jackson the finger.

Longstreet was the "thumb" in almost every other fight and Jackson the finger. At Gettysburg, Longstreet wanted to fight the entire battle as a thumb only. Lee had two new "fingers" — Ewell and A. P. Hill. Neither had learned yet to be a finger in the Jackson manner. Result: Lost battle for Lee.

Lee, by his own words, had become psychologically mesmerized by past victories. He, too, was a victim of psychological warfare. After the failure of Pickett's charge on July third, he remarked, "It's all my fault, I thought my soldiers were invincible."

Although the myth of Lee's invincibility had been shattered at Gettysburg, like all myths it died hard. When Grant took over as General-in-Chief and went to Virginia to conduct operations in the spring of 1864, Meade's veterans were not impressed by either his reputation or his appearance. They simply expressed a view of skepticism in the words, "He ain't fit Bobbie Lee yet."

Tucker's book is excellent reading for Civil War buffs and professional historians as well as for the average reader who is interested in getting a good look at one important aspect of Americana.

Maj. Gen. George B. Pickett, Jr., USA-ret.
Montgomery

J. Leonard Raulston and James W. Livingood, *Sequatchie, A Story of the Southern Cumberlands.* (University of Tennessee Press, 1974, Pp. 278, $9.75.)

J. Leonard Raulston, historian of Marion County, Tennessee, and James W. Livingood, Distinguished University Research Professor of History at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, have collaborated to produce one of the finest of local histories. The book is notable for its format as well as for its content. The maps, sketches, and photographs are outstanding. The layout of the book is superb.

It is perhaps an oversimplification to say that all history is local history of some area. However, the broad general application of a local history is certainly exhibited in this chronicle of the seventy-mile-long valley of the Sequatchie River which extends from northern Alabama into eastern Tennessee. Here in a picturesque region in the heart of the Cumberlands, the drama of American history takes place. On this relatively small stage a panorama of our heritage unfolds.

The drama begins with Archaic Indians who left charred embers in Russell Cave 9000 years ago. Later, De Soto rested in the valley. The explorers and traders came—Joliet and Marquette, the canny Scots, Acadians, Spanish, English, French.

Finally the pioneer settlers found the beautiful valley and their long struggle with the Indians brings upon the scene Daniel Boone and those intrepid Indian brothers, Dragging Canoe, Little Owl, and Badger. John Ross and Sequoyah play their parts.

Pioneer life is accurately depicted with coverage given to the gamut of history—churches, schools, agriculture, industry, transportation, medicine, and social life. This is no dull recital of founding dates and locations, but rather an intimate and exciting narrative of the reality of life.

Even an isolated valley feels the impact of national and international events, and the authors recount the effects of major national conflicts upon the lives of the folk of the Sequatchie. The Civil War actually penetrated the fastness of the area and here the military ebb and flow left its scars upon the people. The tragic war had an added horror to these folk who lived in a border area where loyalties were divided.

The struggle between the Union and the Confederacy to control the valley has been characterized as a "military drama without parallel in the nation's history." The fight for supplies was so fierce that one report said "mules were living on wagon tongues and fence rails." In a futile effort to keep warm, the soldiers "burned up enough rails to fence a county."

The divided loyalties of the people made the aftermath of the Civil War even more painful. Finally the pioneer spirit

prevailed and the drama moves on to TVA, broad highways, improved schools, mining, newspapers, and prosperity. The authors sum up the story in their final sentence. "The hills, valleys and coves have changed but little . . .; only the human drama and the ideas born in the minds of men have altered as life has moved on to meet the challenges of the future."

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